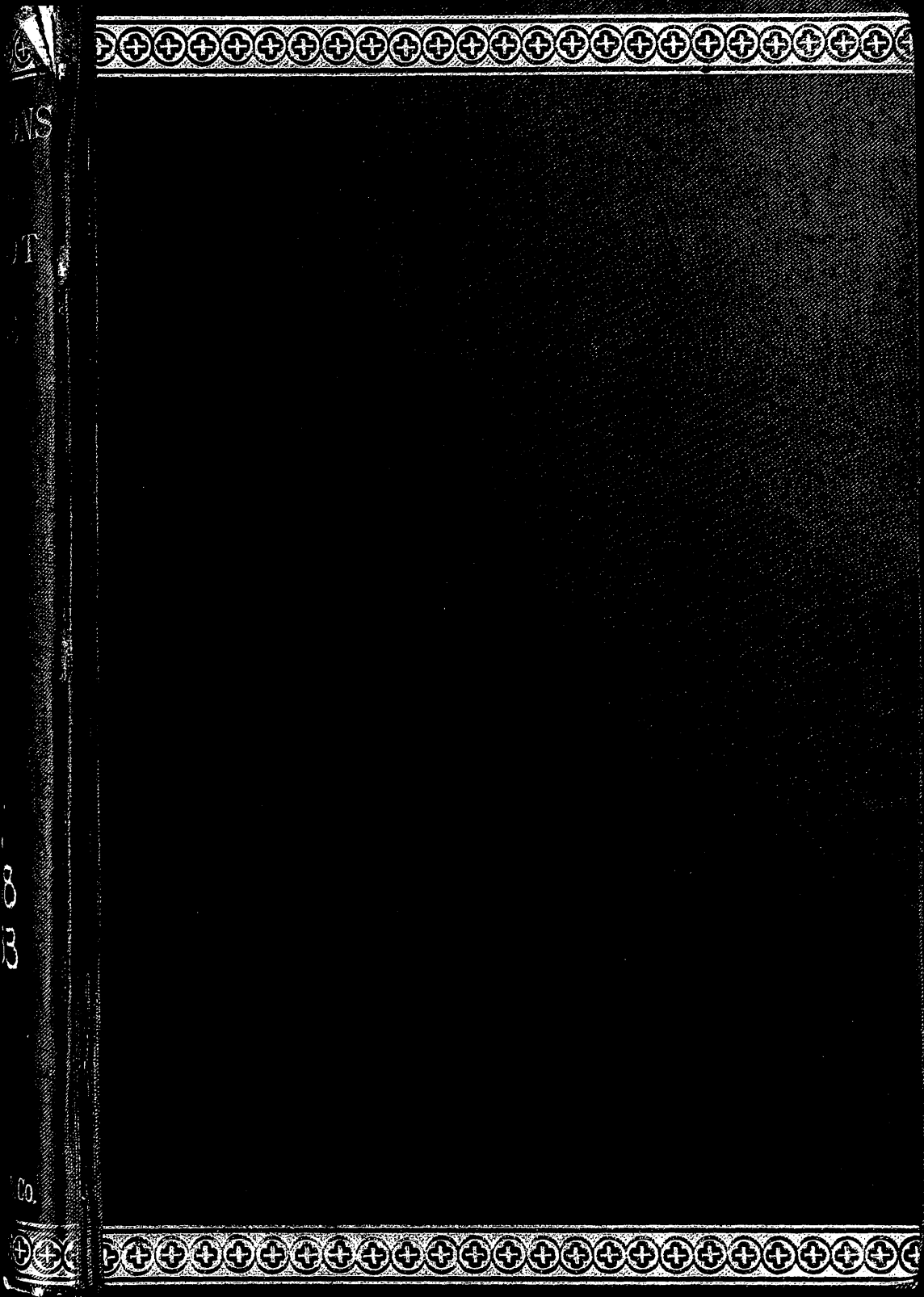




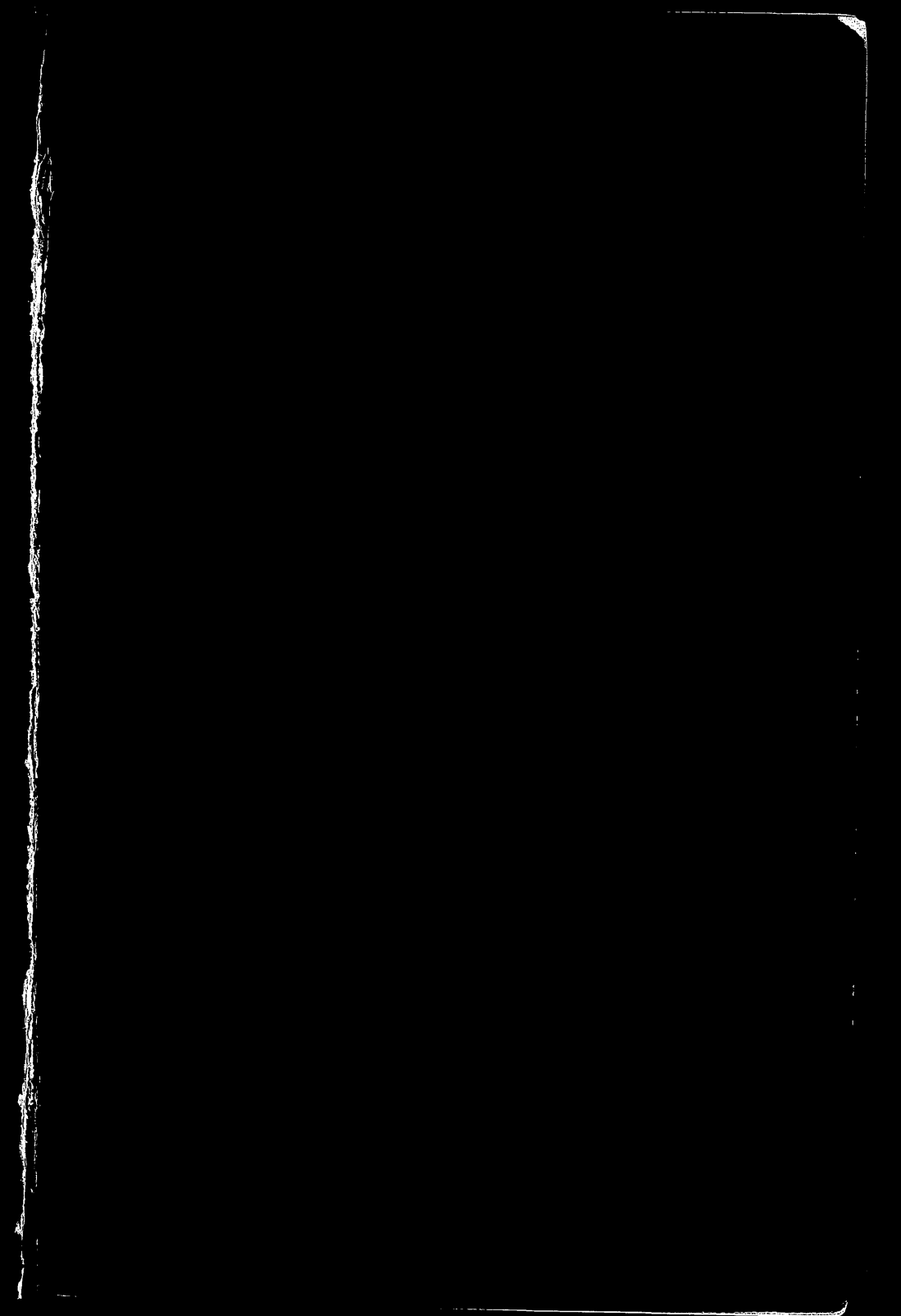
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THE
COMPANIONS

OF
CHURCH
FOR

THE DEVOUT LIFE:

LECTURES DELIVERED IN ST. JAMES'S CHURCH, LONDON,
IN 1875-6.

WITH PREFACE

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PREFACE.



A FEW words seem to be needed by way of explanation of the nature and purpose of the Discourses contained in this volume.

Having been primarily designed for the pulpit of a parish church, they have too much of an homiletical character to answer to the description of reviews or essays; but as they were also intended for publication after delivery, on that account, as well as from the nature of their subjects, more literary labour has been bestowed upon them than is usual, or practicable, or perhaps even desirable, in the case of ordinary sermons. The test which the late Duke of Wellington is said to have proposed for a parliamentary effort—"Does it read well? If it does, it was not a good speech"—is not wholly inapplicable to a sermon. The *labor limæ* is apt to dissipate that flavour of spontaneousness and to weaken that magnetic influence of personal conviction and feeling to which extemporaneous addresses owe so much of their peculiar attraction and power. It demands

more art than is commonly or easily attainable to combine the recommendations peculiar to written compositions with the particular kind of effect which is essential to oratorical success. At the same time, a composition which has fallen flat from the pulpit, as Burke's speeches did upon the House, may be well suited for attentive perusal, and amply repay it both in interest and in edification. If the two results of immediate acceptance and thoughtful satisfaction in after study are attained by the same speaker, an ideal is realised which leaves little to be desired. It would not be becoming to say here how nearly this has been done in the present volume, but there need be no hesitation in expressing confidence that it has been earnestly aimed at throughout.

The class of subjects here treated was suggested by the Bishop of Derry, and no apology can be necessary for having introduced it into a parish pulpit at a service usually attended by the merest sprinkling from the parochial congregation. The subjects themselves are of a kind that, if dealt with less elaborately, more briefly, and in a more popular style, need not be wholly excluded from the ordinary round of any pulpit ministrations; and as education makes progress, it will become increasingly requisite that they should find a place there.

A reading people will want guidance as to the books they shall choose as devotional or didactic manuals, not to say that those which they are most likely to fall in with or to select for themselves will generally require to have their best use indicated and directed, and their possible misleading obviated. Much as the Christian community is indebted to such writings as are discussed in the following pages, there are few, if any, of them which are altogether free from objection of some kind, and to some of the most popular of the class may be attributed errors by which schism has been aggravated, unsoundness in the faith fomented, and fanaticism inflamed. Wherever such mischief threatens, the pulpit cannot properly ignore it; while it is clearly bound to lend its aid to those who look for counsel in the choice of such important helps to piety as are to be found in godly books which will bear to be read again and again.

Books of this description have an especial value, and should be commended to use with especial urgency in an age like our own. The provocations to mental restlessness and the temptations to mental distraction—let it rather be called “dissipation”—in the midst of which we breathe and move, have a strong tendency to incapacitate for the concentration and continuity of serious thought, which are so essential

both to a firm grasp of revealed truth, and to depth of spiritual affection and steadfastness of holy living. It must be obvious that retirement and meditation are not of themselves sufficient to counteract these pernicious influences. Thoughts and interests which have largely engrossed the mind can be effectively displaced only by giving admission to others which can engage it as fully and strongly as they did ; and meditation will continually lose its thread and wander back into its beaten paths if not kept within the desired bounds by restraints or attractions outside and independent of the mind itself. Reading well chosen exercises such control, and exercises it with the more salutary effect in proportion as it presents to the mind less of any novelty but what is inherent in pregnant thoughts—thoughts that from the same germs continually strike deeper and deeper, expand and develop as they are contemplated into new forms and combinations, and hold the attention arrested as upon the same spot, within the circle of the same associations, and breathing still the same intellectual, moral, or spiritual atmosphere. It is not only that the devout life being primarily and principally subjective more readily assimilates a pabulum which contains a large infusion of the subjective element, but that there is a nutritive virtue in the single dish of wholesome

food not to be extracted from the variety by which an unhealthy appetite needs to be stimulated or gratified. It is a remark of M. Michelet's ('The People,' p. 75) that "a single book, read through and through, ruminated on and pondered over, is often more fruitful than a vast mass of undigested reading." "I lived for whole years" (he says) "on a Virgil, and found myself well off. An odd volume of Racine, purchased by chance at a stall on the quay, created the poet of Toulon."

Akin to these effects which a single good book can produce, in virtue of its being *one*, are those which arise out of its bringing into close and repeated intercourse with a single mind. To whatever extent it may be true that there is gain in the multiplication of counsellors, it is not true, but the reverse, in regard to the nurture, training, and practice of the devout life. The individual soul will gain more from consulting a single good spiritual guide, even one who may not always and in all respects command implicit deference, than by culling only their choicest principles, maxims, or examples, from a variety of persons with none of whom it holds sufficient converse to catch from them the spirit which gives birth to and informs their sayings or their acts.

The practical recognition of this principle

may be seen in the Holy Scriptures themselves. Not to mention the manner in which the name of Moses is used in the New Testament to give authority to the Old, of the two great divisions of the Bible, that which belongs to the distinctively spiritual or subjective dispensation conveys to us the mind of God in connection more or less intimate with a single individual. Measuring from the record of St. Paul's conversion, in the ninth chapter of the Acts, to the end of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is, at any rate, deeply imbued with the Pauline spirit, more than a third of the New Testament may be said to employ, directly or remotely, one person as the chief medium for such divine communications as are made through the written Word: and if we were asked to specify what portion of the New Testament is the most calculated to minister to the subjectivity of the devout life, and has been found by experience to do so, we should certainly point to the Epistles of St. Paul, which, excluding the Epistle to the Hebrews, constitute one-fourth of the whole of that sacred volume. Earnestly too as the Apostle deprecates, for himself as well as for others, the character of a party leader, he does not hesitate again and again to commend himself as a guide of spiritual thought, as well as an exemplar of religious practice. Indeed, may

we not say of the teaching of Christ Himself that it has always the more power to influence the individual soul in proportion as it is received, not as if it were a collection of oracular utterances, vaguely traceable to God in their origin, and reaching us through we know not how many different human or earthly media, but as one individual whole, proceeding from the one heart and the one mind of the One Incarnate Lord, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? Even where unity of authorship is doubtful or does not really exist, the mere supposition or imagination of it seems to exercise a potent influence in commending spiritual writings to the pious soul. How much of the edification and comfort which have for ages been derived from the Psalms is due to their being popularly received as "the Psalms of David." It may be doubted whether the 'De Imitatione' would have enjoyed all its popularity if it had been received by the Christian world as a mere fasciculus of pious thoughts, precepts, and aspirations, gathered by some one or other from various sources, instead of as the original work of a particular (but very doubtful) author—Thomas à Kempis, of whose history and character not one reader in a thousand knows anything whatever. And to take an example from profane literature, what should we not lose of the spell with which

the very name of the Iliad binds us if we habitually contemplated it with critical eyes, as a gradual accretion of anonymous rhapsodies, instead of fondly regarding it as the offspring of the single mind of

“The blind old man of Scio’s rocky isle”?

The remarks of the Dean of Norwich in the opening of his discourse renders it needless to reconcile the foregoing recommendations of uninspired works with the paramount claims of the Bible itself. As substitutes for the pure and simple Word, such works will never adequately support a really devout life. It is only as supplementary to the Scriptures that the value here estimated is claimed for them. We must drink the healing and invigorating water fresh and fresh from the sacred source, and then seek the best aids, these among the chief, in applying the principles, giving direction to the feelings, and employing the capacities and the energies which owe their derivation to that fount alone.

J. E. K.

*St. James’s Rectory,
September 20, 1875.*

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THE 'DE IMITATIONE CHRISTI.'

The permanent popularity of any book is a proof of its value—Unparalleled popularity and diffusion of the 'De Imitatione Christi'—Number of editions—Equally acceptable to readers of all countries and times—Secret of this popularity.

1. Interminable discussions as to the authorship. 2. The claims of two writers only possess any intrinsic probability. 3. Quiet life of Thomas à Kempis. 4. Troubled career of Jean Gerson; peacefulness and humility of his closing years; terrible times in which he lived. 5. His probable share in the 'Internal Consolation'; differences between the several books of the 'Imitatio'; it expresses the wisdom of many minds and ages; St. Benedict; St. Francis of Assisi; St. Bernard; St. Bonaventura; St. Thomas of Aquinum; other mystics; remark of St. Francis de Sales. 6. It is "the Gospel of Monasticism"; great services rendered by the monasteries; the high ideal which they helped to keep alive. 7. The 'Imitatio' abounds in deep sayings. 8. Two of its main characteristics: (i.) its unsacerdotal spirit—evils of sacerdotalism; (ii.) its protest against luxurious ease. 9. Two main defects of the 'Imitatio': (i.) its tone of despairing sadness; (ii.) its entire self-absorption. 10. Christianity is wiser and deeper than its best interpreters; Christ only has the words of Eternal Life.

'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life.'—
JOHN VI. 6.

No book can achieve a permanent and universal popularity unless, to an unusual degree, it meets the wants and stirs the feelings of the human heart. Accidents of time or circumstance may indeed cause a particular treatise to be widely read, and even to produce a deep impression, for a decade or a generation; but when we find a work valued in all countries—when it is equally popular in every language—when

its original influence survives the great secular changes which alter the dynasties, the philosophies, nay even the religions of mankind—it must then be either the expression of the loftiest individual genius, or into it, as into some sacred goblet, must have been crushed the rich clusters of the wisdom of centuries. Such books are few in number, and they have for the most part been written in immortal verse. Among the works dedicated to religion and morality which have had this high destiny, the majority have been so enshrined in the reverence of men that—like the Vedas, the Zend Avesta, and the Koran—they have been exempted from ordinary criticism as sacred and inspired; but among books confessedly human the 'De Imitatione Christi,' which we to-day consider, stands, for diffusion and popularity, alone and unparalleled. Nearest to it is the 'Pilgrim's Progress;' but the 'Pilgrim's Progress' owes no little of the spell which it has exercised to the potent interest of its allegory, and yet, even with this aid, it has never attained to the same astonishing pre-eminence. That a book purely devotional—a book which gains no hold by its eloquence, and derives no interest from illustration—a book which has no deep mysteries to reveal, no splendid theories to propound, no elaborate conclusions to demonstrate—should have won for itself a supremacy so unquestioned, a gratitude so ardent, is but a fresh confirmation of what the great Greek thinker said, that much learning teacheth not, but "the Voice of the Sibyl"—that is, the voice of sacred enlightenment—"uttering things simple, and unperfumed, and unadorned, reaches through unnumbered years by the aid of God."* If the value of a book can in any way be gauged by the hold it wins upon the attention of myriads, then the value of the

* Herakleitos.

'Imitatio' must be indeed immense. It has been in men's hands for at least four hundred and fifty years; its editions in various ages and in various languages are to be counted by thousands; it has been a favourite with readers of every rank; and though it was written by one of different nationality, of different life, of different religion from our own—though the writer had been cramped for years by the narrowness of the Monastery, and trained from childhood in the aridities of the School—though the disputes which enthralled his day are dead, and the systems which moulded his destiny have passed away—though, since he was laid in his unknown grave, Empires have risen and fallen, and Churches flourished and decayed—yet here, in England, and in the latter half of the nineteenth century, it is probable that there are very few in this congregation who are not perfectly familiar with those "brief quivering sentences," which make us feel while we read them as though we had laid our hand upon the heart—throbbing with sorrows like our own—which beat so many centuries ago in the old mystic's breast. Some of us may recall how our greatest living writer of fiction describes the emotions of her heroine, when first, on finding the little volume, a Voice from the far-off Middle Ages communicates to her a soul's experience and belief. And the author adds, that the reason why, to this day, the small old-fashioned volume works miracles, turning bitter waters into sweetness, is "because it was written by a hand that waited for the heart's prompting;—because it is the chronicle of a solitary, hidden anguish, struggle, trust, and triumph, not written on velvet cushions, to teach endurance to those who are treading with bleeding feet upon the stones. And it remains to all time the lasting record of human needs and human consolations, the voice of a brother, who, ages ago, felt and suffered and renounced—in the

cloister perhaps, with serge gown and tonsured head, with much chanting, and long fasts, and with a fashion of speech different from ours—but under the same silent far-off heavens, and with the same passionate desires, the same strivings, the same failures, the same weariness.” *

1. The writer of the ‘Imitatio Christi’ is not known, and perhaps never will be known, with absolute certainty. The dispute about the authorship has filled a hundred volumes, and is still so undecided that the voice of the sweetest and humblest of books has come to us mingled, for the last two and a half centuries, with one of the most bitter and arrogant of literary controversies. The Benedictines, the Congregation of St. Maur, the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, the Congregation of the Index, the French Academy, the Parliament of Paris,†—Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, England,—have all taken part in the interminable discussion. But what the writer himself said was, “Search not who spoke this and that, but attend to what is spoken,”‡ and “*ama nesciri*,”§ love to be unknown. Yet the desire to discover whose is the voice to which we are listening rises above a mere vain curiosity, because it would be instructive to learn what was the life and what the conditions from which have flowed utterances so sweet and pure. And though the question cannot be considered as settled, it is settled within certain limits. Of the nine or ten saints and doctors to whom at different

* George Eliot, ‘Mill on the Floss,’ ii. 187.

† Malou, ‘Recherches sur le véritable Auteur de l’Im. de Jésus-Christ,’ p. xi.

‡ ‘Imit.’ i. 5. “Non quaeras, quis hoc dixerit, sed quid dicatur, attende.”

§ ‘Imit.’ i. 2. “Si vis aliquid

utiliter scire et discere, ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari.” The phrase was, however, a commonplace of the mystics, and occurs in St. Bernard, ‘De Nativ. Domini,’ iii. “Tu ergo qui Christum sequeris, inventum absconde thesaurum; *ama nesciri*.”

times the work has been attributed, the pretensions of three alone can be now said to possess the least germ of probability. These three are a certain Gersen de Cabanis, Thomas Hemerken of Kempen, and Jean le Charlier de Gerson; and the claims of the first of the three,—a supposed Benedictine Abbot of Vercelli, in Italy, who is said to have lived in the earlier years of the thirteenth century, but whose very existence is problematical, and of whom at any rate we know nothing whatever beyond the syllables of his name,—those claims, founded on dubious manuscripts, confused orthography and misread dates, may now be considered to be set at rest.*

2. The two, then, between whom rests the glory of the authorship—though in truth earthly glory was the last thing for which the author would have wished †—are *Thomas à Kempis*, subprior of the Monastery of St. Agnes, in the diocese of Cologne, and *Jean Gerson*, Chancellor of the University of Paris, and one of the grandest figures of his time.

3. The lives of both these saints of God fell in the same dreary epoch. It was that “age of lead and iron,” of political anarchy and ecclesiastical degradation, of war, famine, misery, agitation, corruption, which marked the close of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century. Thomas à Kempis, born in 1379, died at the age of ninety-two; Gerson, born in 1363, died at the age of sixty-one. They were thus contem-

* The arguments of Renan (in his ‘*Études religieuses*’) for the Abbot of Vercelli are utterly fantastic. The claims of the Avogadri ms. are now generally abandoned, and its date is probably 1549, not 1349. As against Gerson, Renan’s arguments are extremely superficial, and are

founded, apparently, on a total ignorance of Gerson’s devotional and non-polemic writings; e.g. the ‘*De Monte Contemplationis*,’ ‘*De Paupertate Spirituali*,’ ‘*De Parvulis ad Christum trahendis*,’ &c.

† ‘*Imit.*’ i. l. “*Vanitas est honores ambire, et in altum te extollere.*”

poraries for forty-five years of their lives. But the destinies of the two men were utterly different. Thomas, the son of an artisan, a quiet recluse, a copier of manuscripts, was trained at Deventer, and was received into a monastery in the year 1400 at the age of twenty-one. In that Monastery of St. Agnes—"valde devotus, libenter solus, nunquam otiosus,"*—he spent seventy-one years of perfect calm, unbroken except by one brief period, in which he fled from his cell rather than acknowledge an archbishop to whom the Pope had refused the pallium.† This was almost the sole event of a life in which we are told that it was his chief delight to be alone *in angello cum libello*.‡ "He bore," says a brief biography of him, "great penury, labours, trials; he composed various short treatises for the edification of youth, in a style plain and simple, yet lofty and effective; and further, he was for many years a lover of the Lord's Passion, and marvellously apt at consoling those who were in temptation or adversity."§

4. Far different from this life "in a little corner with a little book" was the troubled, prominent, impassioned life of *Jean Gerson*, the *Doctor Christianissimus*. Rising while yet young to a leading position, he was appointed

* From a contemporary MS. notice of him first edited by Mgr. Malou ('Rech.' p. 388).

† 1429-1432.

‡ On a picture of him at Zwoll is the inscription, "In omnibus requiem quaesivi, nec inveni nisi in angello cum libello."

§ Quoted in 'Biogr. Univ.' xxvii. 546. A number of very strong arguments in favour of Thomas à Kempis have been adduced by Mgr. Malou, Évêque de Bruges, in his 'Rech. hist. et crit. sur le vérit. Auteur de

l'Imit.' (3rd ed., Paris, 1858). They prove decisively that *very early copies* of the book were made by à Kempis, and make out a strong, but not to my mind absolutely decisive, case in favour of his *authorship*. Prof. Karl Hirsche, in his 'Prolegomena zu einer neuen Ausgabe der Im. Christi,' says that a Brussels ms. is shown to be the author's autograph copy by a peculiar rhythmical punctuation, found also in the known works of à Kempis, but which has escaped the notice of the editors.

Chancellor of the University of Paris before the age of thirty, and, struggling against popes, and councils, and mobs, and kings, became the stormiest champion of a stormy time. His life rang with combats and contradictions. Living in the perilous days of Azincour and of the Great Schism,—in the days when a maniac* was King of France, and a monster was Pope at Rome,† and when a nation, paralysed at once by foreign invasion and domestic misery, was equally impotent to restrain the furious excesses of the nobles under the Duke of Orleans, or of the butchers under the Duke of Burgundy,—we find him in politics, now a Burgundian thundering into the ears of the princes the terrible maxim, “Nulla gravior Deo victima quam tyrannus,”‡ now an Armagnac pronouncing the funeral oration over the murdered Orleans, refusing to pay taxes to the Cabochiens, and hiding himself from their fury in the vaults of Notre Dame. In Church policy we see him, now denouncing in burning language the autocracy of popes, and now accepting the humblest orders of monastic obedience. In religious controversy he is at once the burner of Huss and the model of Savonarola,—at one time urging what he calls the cruel mercy of putting to death the Wickliffe of Bohemia,§ and at another using language which leads to his denunciation by Romish bishops as a precursor of the Reformation.|| And, when all his life

* Charles VI. of France.

† John XXIII.

‡ ‘Considerat. cont. adulator.’ Opp. iv. 624. Michelet, ‘Hist. de France,’ iv. 53.

§ Gerson, ‘Ep. ad Archiep. Prag.’ 27th May 1414. Bulæus, V. 270, quoted by Michelet, ‘Hist. de France,’ iv. 382.

|| Those who accept the new dogma of Infallibility naturally

dislike the man who wrote ‘De Auferibilitate Papae.’ Bishop Malou quotes, with approval, the strong condemnation of Gerson by Cardinal Bellarmine, Nardi, &c. The latter calls him “a man fatal to the Church of God, and the ultimate cause of Lutheranism, Jansenism, and the French Revolution” (Malou, p. 329-334). Cardinal Pallavicini says that

seemed to have culminated in one long failure; when the University, whose authority he had so splendidly supported, was humiliated and crushed; when he is forced to hide under a disguise and wander away from the land to which he dared not return; when he found that the martyrdom of Huss had rather stimulated than checked the spirit of inquiry;—when he had wholly failed to elevate the tone of a sordid episcopate, or bring about the reform of a corrupted priesthood;—when he had even been unable to procure from the assembled Fathers of Constance, to whose influence he had so largely contributed, any decisive condemnation of the abhorrent doctrine of political assassination;—forced then to see how utterly little is man even at his greatest, and how different are the ways of man's nothing-perfectness from those of God's all-completeness, the great Chancellor, who has been the soul of mighty councils,* and the terror of contumacious popes, takes obscure refuge, first in a monastery of Tyrol,† afterwards under the rule of his brother at Lyons, and there, among the strict and humble Celestine monks, passes his last days in humility and submission. Far other thoughts than those of his tumultuous life had been revealed to him as he wandered, in danger and privation, among the mountains of Bavaria,—or, rather, those earlier objects had faded from the horizon of his soul like the burning hues of a stormy sunset; but as, when the sunset crimson has faded, we see

Luther borrowed his views to attack the Holy See. Obviously, the non-sacerdotal, non-Romanist character of the 'Imitatio' tells much more in favour of Gerson's authorship than for the claim of à Kempis.

* The members of the Council of Constance wept when they

heard the news of his death. 'Act. Conc. Const.' (Quoted by Malou, p. 329.)

† It is remarkable that no less than ten MSS. which attribute the work to Gerson have been found in the Austrian Abbey of Moelck, in which he took refuge after the Council of Constance.

the light of the eternal stars, so when the painted vapours of earthly ambition had lost their colouring, Gerson could gaze at last on those "living sapphires" which glow in the deep firmament of spiritual hopes. He had been a leader among the schoolmen, now he cares only for the simplest truths. He had been a fierce gladiator in the arena of publicity, now he has passed into the life of holy silence. At his hottest period of strife he had cried out, "Peace, peace, I long for peace;" * now at last there has fallen on his soul—not as the world giveth—that peace that passeth understanding. He who had taken his equal place among princes and cardinals, now seeks only the society of little children; and teaching them, and taught by them, and asking no reward but their innocent prayers, he leads them with him to the altar, that there they may lift their little white hands to heaven and follow him in the prayer he teaches them: "Oh, my God! oh, my Creator! have pity on Thy poor servant, Jean Gerson." And thus, gathering the little ones around his dying bed that he may breathe his last amid their purity and peace, died the grandest orator and politician of his day; and because even in his worst errors his ends had been unselfish, and even during his most flagrant contradictions his soul had been sincere, they engraved upon his tomb—happy, it has well been said,† is he who is worthy of such an epitaph—the two words, *Sursum Corda*—"Lift up your hearts!"

It is pleasant to know that there was such an ending to such a life;—that one who had drunk of the turbid waters of dispute learnt at last the sweetness of renunciation and obedience;—that one who had taken his

* "Pax, pax fiat; pacem volo, pacem super omnia concupisco." Sermon at Tarrascon.

† Michelet, 'Hist. de France,' iv. 382.

share in the fierce and profitless logomachies of Nominalists and Realists could quietly say at last, "What matters it to us about genera and species?"*—that one who had felt the utter vanity of human wishes found at last an Elim in the wilderness, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And whether Gerson actually wrote the 'Imitatio' or not, it seems to me that in many a sentence of it I catch the faint echo of accents which once rang with passion though now they are curbed into humility—the hollow and far-drawn murmurs that follow the detumescence of a storm. There is a certain fascination about the supposition that, at a time when the chief literature consisted of corrupt fabliaux and despicable farce—in that wretched epoch of the Great Schism and the Avignon Papacy—when a great preacher let fall on his trembling auditors the fearful doubt that perhaps, since the Schism began, no single soul had been saved—it is pleasant to think that at such a moment of despair and desolation, of perplexity and terror, amid the ruin of all his objects and the disenchantment of all his hopes, such a man as Gerson should have shown to weary souls the path of peace, and—greater in his downfall than in his splendour—should, from the silence of his monastery, have uttered the quiet voice which has led so many sinners to the feet of God.

5. And in one form at any rate in which the 'Imitatio' has been most popular, namely 'The Book of Internal Consolation'—a French version of the 'Imitatio,' less ascetic in tone and more adapted to the simple and the ignorant—it is far from improbable that Gerson had a share.† Of the entire book, however, as it now stands,

* 'Imit.' I. iii. 2. "Et quid nobis de generibus et speciebus?" This exactly resembles an expression of Gerson, 'Contr. van.

curiositatem.' Opp. i. 11.

† See the arguments adduced very temperately in the edition of 'Le Livre de l'internelle Consola-

neither he nor any man can be regarded as the exclusive author. No one, I think, can have read it, consecutively and attentively, without having been struck by the differences between the several books. The eloquent and exalted passion of the third book differs wholly from the resigned and humble simplicity of the first, and both from the subtle mysticism of the fourth. The first is perhaps the best and sweetest, and it recalls to mind the deepest peacefulness of holy retirement, the scenery of Perugino, the calm sweet faces of the early Benedictine monks; * but the whole book has been compared to a monastic garden, flourishing under the dew of heaven, and filled with "the lilies of a purity whiter than snow, the roses of divine love, the blue cyanias of heavenly meditation, the dark violets of nightly prayer."† Moods indeed differ at different times, but in point of fact no one person wrote, or perhaps could have written, this book exactly as it stands. It is the legacy of ages; it is the gospel of monasticism; it is the psalter of the solitary; it is the cyclic utterance of the mystic; it is the epic poem of the inward life. It is all involved in the Rule of St. Benedict with its glorification of humility, labour, and obedience,‡ and in that story of how, one evening, the saint stood in the window of Monte Cassino, and saw the whole world beneath him bathed in

tion,' by MM. Moland et Ch. d'Héricault, Introd. lxx-cii. The unction, the sadness, the emotional outbursts of 'L'interne Con-solation' bear a close resemblance to the known writings of Gerson, and the scope of the book is in exact accordance with his desire to extend and popularise the mystic wisdom of love which he placed so far above earthly knowledge. "Et à ce peuvent simples gens venir en laissant les cures du monde et en gardant leur cœur

pur et net." M. Gence (*d.* 1840) may be said to have devoted the labours of his whole life to prove that Gerson wrote the 'Imitatio.' Among other works he published 'Parallèle des Phrases de l'Im. de J.-C. et des passages tirés des œuvres morales de Gerson,' 1836. See too Vert's 'Gersoniana.'

* Renan, *ubi supra*,

† Mooren, 'Nachr. über T. à Kempis,' p. 178.

‡ De Gregori, 'Hist. de l'Imit.' i. 53.

glory and sunshine, and *inspexit et despexit*—gazed on, and looked down upon it all. It is in the voluntary pauperism, the rapt asceticism, the radiant happiness of St. Francis of Assisi. It is in St. Bernard's 'Commentary on the Song of Songs,' and in the story of how, while yet a boy, he plunged and stood neck-deep in the icy stream to subdue rebellious thoughts. It is in the 'Stimulus Amoris' of St. Bonaventura, and in the stories of how, when they brought him the offer of a cardinal's hat, they found him washing the meanest vessels of his monastery, and how when he was asked the source of his astonishing knowledge, he pointed in silence to his crucifix. It is in the sermons of St. Thomas of Aquinum, and in his lofty prayer, "Give me, O Lord, a noble heart which no earthly affection can drag down!" It is in the writings of the Brothers of Windesem;—in the sermons of John Tauler;—in the 'De Vanitate Mundi' of Hugo de St° Victore;—in the 'De Spiritu et Animâ' of Isaac de l'Étoile;—in the 'Arbor Crucifixi Jesu' of Ubertino de Casal. The thoughts and expressions of all these may be found in the 'Imitatio,' as in many other devotional and mystic books of the Middle Ages, and in the undisputed writings of Gerson and of à Kempis.* Whoever was the compiler of the book did but gather into one rich casket the religious yearnings, the interior consolations, the wisdom of solitary experience, which had been wrung from many ages of Christian life. In this sense the bold saying of St. François de Sales is

* On the tone of all these writings, see Schmidt, 'Essai sur les Mystiques du xiv^e Siècle,' and Hauréau, 'Hist. de la Phil. scolastique,' i. ch. xx. ii. p. 489 *seqq.* The Augsburg mss. bear the title 'Compiler hujus opusculi fuit quidam frater Thomas.' Jean-Marie Suarez (who has found several followers), in the preface

to his edition of 1667, attributed the first book to Gerson; the second to Ubertino de Casal; the third to Petr. de Corbario (the anti-Pope Nicholas V. 1333); the fourth to Gerson; and the combination of them to Thomas à Kempis. See Gregory, 'Hist. de l'Imit.' 157.

true, that the book has no other author than the Holy Spirit of God.

6. And therefore, since it is the clearest expression of an eternal yearning of the soul, its profound self-questionings, its unshrinking introspection, its pathetic familiarity with its Creator—the book cannot die. Good men may be—they often have been—utterly mistaken in their most cherished theology, and in their most impassioned convictions, but good men never live in vain, because their spiritual achievements are more sacred than their doctrines, and their lives more valuable than their beliefs. And systems, too, founded on erroneous prejudices, may grow corrupt and injurious,

“And God fulfil Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world;”

but if they be based upon sincerity, they cannot fail to leave to mankind a legacy of truth and wisdom. Hence, though many of the conceptions in which it was rooted have decayed, this book will continue to be valued so long as there be hearts that suffer, and that, in suffering, desire to rise heavenward on the two wings of simplicity and purity.* And though monasticism has passed away, yet to speak of it with contempt and hatred involves at once historical shallowness and ignorant ingratitude. In the brutality of anarchic centuries, the monasteries offered to the loving and the gentle their only peaceful home, and even to those whose penitence had at last melted, after lives passed in the orgies of debauchery or the furies of conflict, they provided on this side of the grave a dewy twilight “to close the oppressive splendour of their day.” Of their high services to learning, to literature, to art; of the manuscripts they

* ‘Imit.’ ii. 4. “Duabus alis homo sublevatur a terrenis, simplicitate scilicet et puritate.”

preserved ; of the schools they founded ; of the hospitals they established ; of the cathedrals they built ; of the poverty they relieved ; of the lands they tilled ; of the oppressed interests which they protected ; of the long roll of names splendid in the annals of humanity which they produced, I need not speak ;* but they performed in reality services far loftier than these. For one cannot look on those calm passionless features—at once so grave, so lofty, and so tender—which stand out from the canvas of the early painters, without feeling the extent to which they kept alive the form and colour of “ a beauty beyond that of earth, of a divine sympathy for suffering humanity, of a might beyond that of spear or shield.” † Let us not forget that in those rough and ignorant ages the ideal of a monk was far more tenable than it would be now, and that for any one familiar with the history of those times it is not difficult to understand the fervent exclamation of St. Bernard : “ It is *good* for us to be here ; for here a man lives more purely, falls more rarely, rises more swiftly, walks more carefully, rests more safely, dies more happily, is cleansed more speedily, is rewarded more abundantly.” ‡ We might, indeed, apply to the author of the ‘*Imitatio*’ as to the best of the

* “ He who is ignorant of these services, or who despises them, has only a narrow and vulgar idea of virtue, and stupidly believes that he has fulfilled all his obligations towards God by some habitual practices accomplished with that coldness which excludes zeal and love.”—Leibnitz. (See the fine Introduction to Montalembert’s ‘*Monks of the West*,’ E. tr. pp. 11, 12.) See too Mrs. Jameson’s ‘*Art Legends of the Monastic Orders*,’ p. xx.

† “ Tout ce qui a contribué à maintenir dans l’humanité une tradition de noblesse morale est

digne de respect, et en un sens, de regrets, lors même que ce résultat a dû être acheté par beaucoup d’abus et de préjugés.”—Renan, ‘*Ét. Rel.*’ p. 336.

‡ “ *Cella continuata dulcescit*,” says the author of the ‘*Imitatio*,’ i. 20, and who can doubt the perfect sincerity of conviction expressed in the two lines carved over the door of the Monastery of St. Victor?—

“ *Clastrum nolenti mors est, sed vita
volenti
Per claustrum sedem, caeli mercaberis
Eden.*”

monks, however humble, the lines which the poet applies only to the dead :

"He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
 Envy, and calumny, and hate, and pain,
 And that unrest which men miscall delight,
 Can touch him not and torture not again;
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain
 He is secure, and now can never mourn,
 A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain,
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn."*

Imperfect as may have been his theory of duty, he failed not to win the high grace of heavenly wisdom, which, though he lived in the fifteenth century, may be of special value to the nineteenth; and though he were a Romanist and a monk, he has uttered eternal truths, which may be infinitely precious to the Protestant and the man of the world.

7. It is so of course with the isolated experiences which he has to offer. We are not indeed called to be monks; we need not, in those beautiful and now proverbial lines of the 'Christian Year'—

"We need not bid, for cloister'd cell,
 Our neighbour and our work farewell,
 Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
 For sinful man beneath the sky;"

and yet it remains true that "Solitude is the audience-chamber of God."† In an age when, as a poet of our own has told us,—

"We chatter, nod, and hurry by,
 And never once possess our souls
 Before we die,"‡

may we not all learn something about the way to preserve the bloom and dignity of the spiritual life

* Shelley, 'Adonais.' † W. S. Landor. ‡ Matthew Arnold.

from the quiet voice which bids us "beware of much talk, remain in solitude, and enjoy thy God"?* And is there no deep knowledge of the human heart in such a sentence as "More speedily is the outward enemy overcome if the inward man be not laid waste"?† and no spiritual insight in such a sketch as this of the growth of temptation, "First there cometh to the mind a bare thought, then a strong imagination of evil, then a delight thereof, and an evil motion, and then consent;‡ and so by little and little our wicked enemy getteth complete entrance, whilst he is not resisted at the beginning"? How simple again, and how profound, are the chapters on thoroughly searching our own consciences, and on holy purposes of amendment! And how permanent is the value of that view which is the fundamental view of all mysticism, that God has revealed Himself in his *works* and in His *Son*, so that, both without man's soul and within, the natural and the supernatural co-exist eternally, and He hath not left Himself without witness to any living soul!

8. But though on every page of the 'Imitatio' the earnest and thoughtful Christian may thus find food for profit and for meditation, I can only single out two main and general respects in which, as it seems to me, the book may be to us and to our day pre-eminently useful; and two main and general respects, in which, on the other hand, we can only regard its teachings as questionable and one-sided.

(1) The first main value and glory of the book is the eternal protest which it silently bears against the notion which lies at the very basis of sacerdotalism. A

* 'Imit.' iv. 12.

† Id. iii. 13.

‡ Id. i. 13. "Prius occurrit

menti simplex cogitatio, deinde fortis imaginatio, postea delectatio, et motus pravus et assensio."

Catholic, a priest, a monk, yet—as though raised far above himself and the system which he held, and the ecclesiastical order to which he belonged,—the one truth which he most absolutely realises is the *direct* and *immediate* access of the soul to God. In this way, long before the Reformation, the book must have done infinite good to perplexed and burdened souls, and may serve as a solemn warning to those over whom Rome is exercising her fascinations among ourselves. For it is the very worst error of Romanism, and the source of all its other errors of ambition and arrogance,—and it is one against the encroachments of which in our own Church we should watch most jealously,—that it intrudes into the sacredness of the soul's individuality, that it thrusts all kinds of intermediates between the soul and its Creator. God says, "I am thy Father and thy strong salvation;" Christ says, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden:" but it is but too natural for the soul, in its guilt, its feebleness, its faithlessness, to doubt the directness of the invitation; to imagine that God is not sincere; to strive to approach Him, not directly as a child its father, but—leaning as on broken reeds that pierce the hand—through priests, and rituals, and systems. But in this book there is no interference between the soul and God; no vulgarising of the emotions by unbaring them to human eye; no wearing of the soul upon the sleeve for daws to peck at; no human foot intruding between us and the mercy-seat; no dabbling of the profane hand of human confessor in the secrets of the microcosm. It is an audience-chamber where no ambassador is needed; it is a confessional wherein the soul confesses to and absolves itself.* It sends the penitent neither to book nor

* See some excellent remarks in Milman's 'Latin Christianity,' v. 556 seq.

formula, neither to Church nor Council, neither to Pope nor Priest, neither to Saint nor Angel; but, Go, it says, and clasp thy very Saviour's feet. It teaches the soul not to hide itself among the garden-trees, but even in its guiltiness to listen to the voice of God; it recognises the fundamental truth that "*No man may deliver his brother, nor make agreement unto God for him; for it cost more to redeem their souls, so that he must let that alone for ever.*"*

(2) And besides this indirect, yet none the less solemn, protest against the usurpations of sacerdotalism, there is a warning, quite direct and no less necessary, against the dangers which beset an age of ease. In the reaction against the theory of asceticism, in the denunciation of unnecessary austerities, we have come, I know not how, to imagine that heaven may be gained "in an easy chair," and that crowns of victorious amaranth will be dropped quite naturally on dozing brows. It is not so. It never can be so. All Scripture is a protest against our thinking so. The body, it says, must be subdued; the flesh mortified; the passions crucified; the cross taken; the race run; the battle fought. Every temptation, whether gradual or sudden, must be watched against; every impediment, whether slight or serious, must be thrown aside. We are naturally proud, naturally discontented, naturally selfish; that higher nature which makes men humble, sweet, self-sacrificing, does not achieve the victory without a struggle. We are naturally prone to the indulgence which makes us the slaves of our lower impulses; it is only by strenuous and long-continued effort that we can ever secure over ourselves a serene and tranquil mastery. Anything which teaches us the infinite value of each human soul, anything which opens

* Psalm xlix. 7, 8

our eyes to the awfulness of those spiritual perils which assault and hurt it, anything which brands upon our consciences the intense conviction that a *lax* view of sin is simply a *false* view of sin,—(and these are primary lessons of the ‘*De Imitatione*’)—teaches us a lesson useful to all times, transcendently needful to our own. Souls there may be, which, even from the midst of abundant ease and surrounding splendour, are still able to wing heavenward their steady flight;—but to those who are wounded,—to those who have fallen,—to those who have sinned,—to those who have succumbed to the evil tyranny of habit,—to those, who, blinded by the god of this world, have dethroned the supremacy of conscience,—to such the victory becomes only possible under more strenuous conditions, and the fitting way for them is far rather the

“Stone floor one may writhe on like a worm,”
than

“The mossy pillow blue with violets.”

The method indeed may be different, but the working of it must be analogous, and the end the same. Now, as in the days of the ‘*Imitatio*,’ and in every age, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence;—now, as then, and at all times, we must *strive* to enter in at the strait gate.*

9. But if in these, as in many other respects, the book still continues to be so deeply valuable, yet it must be at the same time admitted that it is not perfect; that its teaching cannot be accepted without distinct reserves;—that it is pervaded by elements which, unless they be corrected and expanded by yet loftier and diviner teaching, make it—as regards

* ‘*Imit.*’ iii. 53. “A notis et a curis oportet elongari, et ab omni temporali solatio mentem tenere privatam.”

some particulars—neither a safe nor a wholesome guide.*

(i.) One of these erroneous elements—one of the *idola theatri* which misled the holy and humble man of heart in his sincere search for truth—is the spirit of utter sadness. In its repudiation of every natural joy the 'Imitatio' breathes a sense of despair,† which we also find in the little golden book of the 'Meditations' of Marcus Aurelius, but which is less surprising and less blameworthy in a pagan emperor than in a Christian monk. I do not say that the soul of the writer was not blessed with that holy joy which is one of the fair fruits of the Spirit which bloom upon the Tree of Life; but this joy of spirit, because it involved a certain revolt and violence against that which is innocent in nature, is less bright, less trustful, less perfect than was within his reach. His joy is like those dim flowers—*flores tristes* Linnæus called them—which bloom only in the twilight; at best it is like

"An Alpine harebell, hung with tears,
By some cold morning glacier,"

not, as the joy of a Christian might be, a gentian glowing with vivid bloom amid the very snow. And this was because the unconscious dualism of the mediæval monks led them, like the ancient Stoics, to defy and reject, instead of using lawfully, the elements of happiness. God has been very good to us; He has placed us in a fair world; He has given us the delight in knowledge; He has given us the charm of art; He has given us the glorious beauty of inanimate nature;

* See Martin's 'Hist. de la France,' v. 558-560; Milman's 'Lat. Christ.' vi. 482-485. To the former book I have been much indebted.

† See 'Imit.' ii. 3, 12, iii. 42.

The 22nd chapter of the first book is "De consideratione humane miserie," in which occur such remarks as "vere miseria est vivere super terram."

He has written His love for us in large letters on the stars of heaven, and in the flowers of spring. But of all this there is not one word in the 'Imitatio';—no accent of human tenderness; no gleam of holy friendship; no great voice of the mountain or the sea. The author must have resembled the melancholy saint, who, after riding all day along the shores of the Lake of Geneva, asked in the evening where it was. That life is miserable, that the world is hopeless, that society is incurable, that knowledge is worthless, that the intellect is a source of peril,*—this is the basis of his system, if not the burden of his song. It is as though for him the flames of some physical Gehenna had flung their lurid glare across the world, and left it without one fountain for our refreshment, without one flower of duty to bloom unscorched beside the path of life.†

(ii.) And perhaps this is sufficient to account for the worst defect of the 'Imitatio,' which is its marvellous self-absorption.‡ It is not of course the vulgar selfishness of personal indulgence, but it still is selfishness, though directed wholly to spiritual ends. The entire book is founded on the erroneous assumption that man's sole work in this world is to work out his own personal salvation—to secure, amid universal conflagration, his individual safety. He seems to have no other conception of sainthood save that of the cenobite—no other ideal of perfection save that of the hermit of the wilderness. "Love to dwell alone with thyself;" "desire communion with none;" "remove thyself far away from acquaintances and dear friends;" "attend wholly unto God and thyself:"—this is his constant admonition,§ and it is not good or necessary or wise.

* 'Imit.' i. 2, *et passim*; compare the "Abêtissez-vous" of Pascal.

† See 'Imit.' i. 24, iii. 12.

‡ 'Imit.' ii. 5: 'Internus homo omnibus curis sui ipsius curam anteposit.'"

§ 'Imit.' i. 8: "De cavendâ

"It is not good for man to be alone," says the first Book of the Bible with eternal truth. "We are framed for mutual help and comfort," says even Marcus Aurelius, and herein, strange to say, the 'Meditations' of the pagan are better, wiser, more Christ-like than the 'Imitatio Christi' of the Christian. For though the great and holy emperor had no such means of knowing as the author of the 'Imitatio' had, that Life is *Worship*, he had learnt—what the other had forgotten or ignored—that Life is not only *Worship* but also *Service*;—that Charity is better than to speak with the tongue of angels;—that there is a nobleness even in wishing oneself accursed to save others;—that to each of us, and to all, God intrusts the love and care of each and all;—that love to Him our Father is best shown by love to Man our brother;—that man has nobler things in life to work at, and to think of, than merely to save himself on some plank of prayer and self-denial out of the fiery surges of some devouring sea. The 'Imitatio,' from beginning to end, does not once catch a glimpse of that truth which has been so brilliantly illustrated in the Eastern legend narrated in the verses of our English poet—how Abou-ben-Adhem once saw a vision of an angel who was writing in a book of gold the names of those who loved their Lord:—

"'And is mine one?' said Abou. 'Nay! not so,'
 Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
 But cheerly still, and said, 'I pray thee then,
 Write me as one that loves his fellow men.'
 The angel wrote and vanished. The next night
 He came again with a great wakening light,
 And shewed the names which love of God had blessed,
 And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

nimiâ familiaritate," i. 17-20, iv. 12; *et passim*. In iii. 53, occur such remarks as: "Ama intus | habitare tecum, nullius require confabulationem;" "totum mundum nihil aestima." &c.

One word more:—

10. To do good and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. If Gerson and à Kempis did not realise that it was the sublimest originality of the character of Christ to go about doing good, *we* know it to be so, and the opportunities of doing so are constantly granted to us. To press upon you such a duty in relation to the maintenance of schools, such as those for which your contributions are to-day requested, would be an insult to your intelligence. Leaving that work for your generous aid, let me add only in conclusion, the inspiring certainty, which the examination of this book has forced upon our notice, and which, though little illustrated, seems to me by no means one of the least forcible evidences for the truth of our religion—that Christianity is larger, wiser, purer, truer, deeper than the best words of its holiest interpreters;—that the Life of Christ unspeakably surpasses the fairest and sweetest lives of even His truest followers. The ‘Imitatio’ says, Annihilate the lower parts of thy nature; the voice of Christ bids us only control and ennoble them. The ‘Imitatio’ says, Abase thy reason; Christ says, Enlighten it. The ‘Imitatio’ teaches us to treat the body as an enemy; the Gospel of Christ bids us train it in sanctity and honour. The ‘Imitatio’ urges us to shun all human intercourse; the Gospel teaches us to be kindly among our kind. The ‘Imitatio’ bids us fly from the wicked world; the Gospel bids us be ready even to die to make it better. The ‘Imitatio’ aims at the salvation of the individual; Christ came to die for all the race.* Yes! if we would find the one true ideal—if we would seek the sole divine example—we must look to Christ and Christ alone. The brightest lustre of His brightest followers is but, at the best, like

* See M. Martin, *ubi supra*.

that dim earthshine reflected from our planet upon the unilluminated orb of its crescent satellite. But the light of Christ is the Light of the World, and is as the Sun goeth forth in his strength. In His light, and in that alone, shall we see light. The most eloquent of His servants does but interpret Him with imperfect utterance and a stammering tongue;—but He is the very Word of God; the greatest of His saints is but a man of like passions with ourselves,—but He is the Son of God, the Saviour of the World. And if, in an age when such multitudes are forsaking Him, His voice appeals to us in the old sad question, “Will ye also go away?” we, at least, with one voice will exclaim, with the whole conviction of our hearts and consciences, “Lord, to whom should we go? Thou—Thou only—Thou for ever—Thou hast the words of eternal life!”

THE 'PENSÉES' OF BLAISE PASCAL.

Character of the 'Pensées': fragments of a designed Apology for Christianity. Pascal's experience: his personal conversion. The book reflects difficulties and conflicts; stern, truthful. Problems in human life caused by, 1. Certainty of the moral law and authority of Conscience; 2. The moral disorder of the world, the greatness and littleness of man and human life. Greatness of the contradictions and evil: that which reconciles one and remedies the other must be as great. The Christian Remedy: the Incarnation and all its consequences. How looked upon by Pascal. How such a book useful devotionally: 1. To elevate and correct devotional habits and feelings—Necessity for healthy devotion of *ideas* and thought, as well as *feeling*; 2. To infuse real soberness and seriousness amid the exciting influences of highly-developed civilization; 3. To impress the necessity of self-watchfulness and obedience as the absolute conditions of attaining to religious truth. Conclusion.

"Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice."—PSALM CXXX. 1.

THE Psalms, which are records of the purest and loftiest joy of which the human soul is capable, its joy in God, are also the records of its dreariest and bitterest anguish, of the days when all seems dark between itself and God, of its doubts, of its despair. Their music ranges from the richest notes of triumphant rapture to the saddest minor key. The Psalms are the patterns and precursors of that mass of literature embodying the experience of the spiritual life which has grown up during the Christian centuries, and some examples of which are at this time proposed for our special notice. The Psalms contain the germs of it, and, like the Psalms, it varies widely in

its scale and tone. It reflects the many sides, the countless moods, of the soul, in its passage through time, confronted with eternity and its overpowering possibilities. It tells of quietness and confidence, of strength and victory and peace. It tells, too, of the storm, of the struggle, of the dividing asunder of soul and spirit; of perplexities which can be relieved only by the certainties of death; of hope wrestling, indeed, undismayed, unwavering, but wrestling in the dark, and, when beheld for the last time on this side the grave, still obstinate, but still unsolaced. Christian life may be upon the heights, and in the sunlight; the lines fall to it in pleasant places, and "the voices of joy and gladness are in its dwellings." But its lot may be also "in the deeps," where "all God's waves and storms have gone over it;" where the voices are those of "deep calling unto deep amid the roar of the waterspouts," voices of anxiety and distress, of "majestic pains," of mysterious sorrow.

Such in the main is the voice of that book on which I am to speak to you, the 'Thoughts,' as it is called, of Blaise Pascal. It is, as we know, a book of fragments found among Pascal's papers after his death, mainly relating to a projected apology for religion, and variously pieced together, according to the judgment of different editors. This is not the place to speak of its singular literary history, of the strange fortunes which have attended on it, of the fate which has given it so much interest for the soberest and deepest belief, and for the most mocking and the most critical unbelief, of France—for Arnauld and Vinet,* for Voltaire and Condorcet, for Sainte-Beuve. I shall say nothing of its apologetic value, as an argument in defence of

* I am glad to express my obligation to this admirable writer's 'Études sur Blaise Pascal.'

Christianity, nor of its place in French literature; nor of what it did, with other writings of Pascal, in bringing religious questions from the technical treatment of the schools into contact with the ideas and language of common life, to be subjects of keen and serious interest to the educated and intelligent in all grades of society. Nor must I dwell on that exquisite purity of language which in itself makes it one of the most instructive of moral lessons. In no writer since the great Greek masterpieces has the "beauty, born" of simplicity and truthfulness, "passed" so profusely into style; a perpetual witness to all who hold a pen against the dishonesty of conventional and affected words, warning them of the first duty of that exact agreement of word and meaning, of that sincerity of the writer with himself as well as with his readers, "*ce consentement de vous avec vous-même,*" out of which, as a principle of composition, Pascal's excellence grew. My business with it is simply as a 'Companion for the Devout Life;' an office which it is not the less qualified to discharge that it makes no formal or direct pretension to do so; though it is not a book of devotion, nor a guide to the details of Christian life, nor a body of meditations or counsels, nor intentionally a record of the history of a religious mind. Nothing was farther from Pascal's thought, than to venture on any such task; nothing would have shocked him more than the notion of painting himself. But in spite of himself he has done so. And if character is elevated and refined, and our loyalty to the unseen strengthened, by seeing how one of the keenest of human minds pierced into the truth [of things, and one of the noblest of human souls thirsted after holiness, these Remains may profitably go with us into our chamber, when we are alone with ourselves and God. They belong to the last years of Pascal's short life, into which so much was crowded, years of sickness and untimely

decay. They are the broken words of a suffering and dying man, to whom truth and reality, always precious, have become imperiously supreme; whose eye has become preternaturally clear in discerning the greatness of man's destiny and hope, the shows and shadows of his present state; and who has ceased to live for anything but God, for the endurance of God's will, and the imitation of His love, while here.

Pascal's 'Apology,' if it had been written, would have been, not a treatise of pure argument, or an analysis of the grounds of religious belief, but the passionate expostulation of profound conviction on the madness and unreason of indifference or loose thinking on a matter of such importance, and such high claims, as Christianity. The religion of Pascal is the religion of a converted man—of a man, I mean, who at a definite time of his life had felt himself touched and overcome by the greatness and the reasonableness of things unseen, and had consciously turned to God; not from vice, but from bondage to the interests of time, from the fascination of a merely intellectual life, from the frivolity which forgets the other world in this. His eyes had been opened, and he had been brought "into the deeps;" "the deeps" far below the mere surface of custom and transient opinion; the deeps of truth about man's condition and God's greatness; the deeps of reality about moral good and moral evil, the relation of eternity to time. And he writes, "out of the deeps"—as one absorbed and awe-struck, and with every fibre strung, by his vivid consciousness of the strange contrasts, the inevitable alternatives, the mighty interests at stake, amid which man's course is to be run. His view of religion rises out of these solemn and unfathomable depths the abyss of life and pain and death, the abyss of sin and ignorance and error, the abyss of redemption and of God's love. Even the mind of Pascal was not

large enough for everything ; these themes absorb and dominate his imagination and thoughts ; and, steadied and consoled as he certainly was by his religion, and capable of the highest transports of Christian gladness, his book is not one of those which reflect the joy, the quiet order, the peace and exultation of Christian life.

The book is a stern one—stern with the severity of the awful vision of truth which had filled the writer's mind, and before which he had trembled ; and its effort is to be strongly, lucidly, plainly *true* about the real state of the case, true before the judgment of the common sense of men of the world. Pascal showed to the full that passion for simple, unaffected, solid reality, which was the characteristic of the early days of Port Royal, of that mighty but short-lived school, the greatest religious birth of the French Church, before whose heroic and sublime singleness of mind, and thoroughness of purpose, and hatred of pretence and display, even the majesty of Bossuet, and the grace of Fénelon, and the sweetness and tenderness of St. François de Sales, and the grand erudition of the Benedictines, fall into a second place. Pascal looks upon the world in which he finds himself, and two things meet him. On the one hand, the certainty of the moral law, the certainty to conscience of its supremacy, the certainty of its excellence beyond comparison over everything else known to man ; and on the other hand, the certain facts of man's actual condition and nature, the anomalies, the disorder, the contradictions, the discords of his present state, the blinding and oppressive mystery which hangs about all that we are and what we are meant for. The old age of the world, after all its long experience, finds strengthening in it still the invincible consciousness that there is nothing greater, nothing surer, than right and duty, nothing more sacred than justice, nothing more beautiful than love. And yet this

divine idea of duty and right, man's distinctive prerogative in nature, seems thrown for no purpose into a world which is for ever contradicting it; it is reflected only in broken distortion on the troubled surface of human society. Pascal had felt as keenly, perhaps, as man ever felt them, the triumphs of pure intellect, in its clearness, its versatility and its strength. He felt the immeasurable distance of mind and genius above all the greatness of outward and material things, above the pomp and glories of riches and power, above all physical perfection. Archimedes, he says, needed nothing of the grandeur of "kings and captains and great men according to the flesh;" he won no victories, he wore no crown; but he was great in his own great order of intellect: the mathematician's enthusiasm kindles at his name—"O how glorious was he to the intellectual eye"—"*O qu'il a éclaté aux esprits.*" But there is an order of greatness yet higher than that of intellect. "The interval, which is infinite," writes Pascal, "between body and mind, represents the infinitely more infinite distance between intellect and charity."* This superiority in kind of moral goodness is Pascal's fundamental axiom, and he, of all men, had a right to lay it down. The strong and nimble mind which played with difficulties, and to whose force all resistance yielded, the soaring imagination, the ambition of the explorer on the traces of unthought-of knowledge, all that made and marked the matchless intellect of his time, the great geometer, the great physicist, the great mechanist,

* "La distance infinie des corps aux esprits figure la distance infiniment plus infinie des esprits à la charité, car elle est surnaturelle."

"Tout l'éclat des grandeurs n'a point de lustre pour les gens qui sont dans les recherches de l'esprit. La grandeur des gens

d'esprit est invisible aux riches, aux rois, aux capitaines, à tous ces grands de chair. La grandeur de la sagesse, qui est nulle part sinon en Dieu, est invisible aux charnels et aux gens d'esprit. Ce sont trois ordres différents en genres."

master, too, of the keenest satire and the most unapproachable felicity of language—he and all that he is, bows down before the unearthly greatness of charity, all confesses the sovereign and paramount excellence of moral perfections, the supreme claims of the moral law of goodness.

And then, with this conviction as to the true law of man's nature, what does he see round him? He sees a world "out of joint," presenting the most contradictory appearances, distracted by the most opposite tendencies, with no remedy for its disorder, no key to its riddles. He pursues through all its forms the contrast between man's greatness and his littleness. Read man in one way, and he seems made for God and truth. Read him in another, and nothing can express the interval which separates him from all that is holy, perfect, eternal; his blind stumbling through an existence which has come from chance, the unmeaningness, the vanity of his life. How is it that he knows so much and can think so powerfully, and yet after all, knows so little and so imperfectly; why should his knowledge, just where it is most important, find an impassable barrier, and truth elude and betray him just where he most wants it? To look at his great endowments, his wonderful achievements, his never-ceasing progress, he seems indeed the crown and glory and perfection of God's creation. But look at him, again, in comparison with what his very powers enable him to see, the immensity, the inscrutableness of the universe, and he sinks into an insignificance which he has not the imagination to measure or the words to express. Lost in this little corner of creation, in this little breathing-time called life—lost between the infinities of space, the infinities of time before and after, the infinities of greatness, the infinities of littleness—lost "in the abyss of that boundless immensity of which he knows nothing," in those "terrible spaces of the universe

which encompass him;” * what can he think of himself? what can he think that he is worth?—“What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?” Look at the things which he does *not* know, and his vaunts of knowledge seem childish. Look at the things which enchant him, the prejudices which enslave him, the basenesses to which he can descend, and is the contempt of the cynic undeserved for so poor a creature? Look at the inevitable fact of death, of the decay which precedes it, or else the untimeliness of its blow, and is it possible to exaggerate the idle fruitlessness of such a lot, except as a link in an eternal and unfeeling chain of fate? So aspiring, so defeated, so undiscouraged; with the strongest impulses to hope, but ever haunted by arguments of despair, he reveals, by fits and starts, his greater and better nature, in the originality of grand deeds and lofty characters; but practically and in the long run, he leads a life which he might lead without God and conscience, guided by calculation of what is pleasant and prudent, calculating rightly in the main, often miscalculating, miserably and fatally. There he is, this marvellously compounded creature, strong even unto death, and yet unstable as water, crossing and contradicting himself through life; the slave of nature, which yet bows to the spell of his power; the slave of habits, yet their creator; the slave of imagination, of

* “En voyant l’aveuglement et la misère de l’homme, en regardant tout l’univers muet, et l’homme sans lumière, abandonné à lui-même, et comme égaré dans ce recoin de l’univers, sans savoir qui l’y a mis, ce qu’il y est venu faire, ce qu’il deviendra en mourant, incapable de toute connaissance, j’entre en effroi comme un homme qu’on aurait porté endormi dans

une île déserte et effroyable, et qui s’éveillerait sans connaître où il est, et sans moyen d’en sortir.”

“Abîmé dans l’infinie immensité des espaces que j’ignore et que tu ignores.” . . .

“Je suis dans une ignorance terrible de toutes choses. . . . Je vois ces effroyables espaces de l’univers qui m’enferment.” . .

which yet he knows the illusions; the slave of opinions, for which he is yet responsible, and which he has contributed to accredit; seeking and finding, and seeking afresh; so ingenious, yet so stupid; so wise, and yet so incredibly foolish; able to do so right, yet constantly doing so wrong; balancing between good and evil, sin and repentance, till the wavering is cut short by death. And that, multiplied by the numbers of mankind, is the broad aspect of human life.

The mass of mankind look at all this under the sway of custom and habit, as a matter of course, familiar as the routine of every day; and they take it all as it comes, they feel no surprise; they acquiesce and are content. But when they try to look below the surface, then come the perplexities and the enigmas. Then come the baffling problems, and the contradictions which defy explanation. Our instruments of knowledge fail us, or play us false. We are born with the instinct and idea of certainty, and imply it in every act and argument; yet certainty flies from our analysis and our verifying tests. If we venture to search deeply, then come difficulties following difficulties, till reason is giddy. Truth is impossible without freedom of thought; yet no sooner is thought free than it eats away all certainty, historical, moral, religious, scientific, till at last it turns upon itself, and surrenders its own consciousness of existence and freedom a prey and sacrifice to a theory. We are distracted between rival claims on our allegiance: * between nature and broad common sense and irresistible convictions, irresistible in spite of all objections, and "reasons of the heart superior to those

* "Qui démêlera cet embrouillement? La nature confond les pyrrhoniens, et la raison confond les dogmatistes. . . . Humiliez-vous, raison impuissante: taisez-

vous, nature imbécile; apprenez que l'homme passe infiniment l'homme, et entendez de votre maître votre condition véritable, que vous ignorez. Écoutez Dieu."

of the intellect;" * and on the other hand, the keen, subtle, finished conclusions of the reasoning faculty, apparently so faultless and impregnable in form, often so formidable and ghastly in their consequences.

What account is to be given of all this? In a well-known passage,† Pascal puts side by side the high and the low view of human life, apart from Christianity, in the persons of two eminent representatives respectively of those two views, Epictetus and Montaigne. One set of thinkers, like Epictetus, look only on the lofty side; they insist on man's greatness, and freedom and moral power; they see in his moral nature the proof of his kinship with the Divine, the image and likeness of God. Another set, like Montaigne, can only smile and doubt and mock at man's efforts after truth, at his pretensions to rise above the level of mortality; they catalogue his uncertainties, his mistakes, his failures; they paint vividly his weakness, his ignorance, his shame. Both are right, and both are wrong: right, in the truth which they assert, wrong as to the truth which they overlook; but both want the key which unlocks the puzzle, the central truth which reconciles the contradiction. Pascal will explain away nothing, will disguise and ignore nothing. He will put his standard and idea of life as high as Epictetus; but he sees, as clearly as Montaigne, the tricks that custom and imagination play, the treacheries of self-interest, the inconsistencies of goodness, the strange mixture in real life of the ridiculous and the pathetic, the gaps in our logic, the short-comings of our proofs; he employs the exaggerations of Montaigne for the purpose of startling men from the trance and spell of mere habit, to realize the strangeness of what is most familiar, the precarious-

* "Le cœur a ses raisons, que la raison ne connaît pas; on le sait en mille choses." "Est-ce par raison que vous aimez?"
 † The conversation with De Sacy.

ness of much that they take for granted. What is the explanation of these anomalies of man's condition, of the perplexities of his life—anomalies and perplexities which to those who see them are certain and crushing? Why is it that, as has been said, "Life is such a comedy to those who think, such a tragedy to those who feel?"* Pascal can see but one explanation of it. Man's greatness is greatness fallen; it is royal greatness, but the greatness, as he expresses it, of a king dethroned, dispossessed, disinherited, banished.† A writer of our own time, as subtle and deep as Pascal, has, without thinking of Pascal, expressed Pascal's thought:—

"To consider the world in its length and breadth, its various history, the many races of men, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts; and then their ways, habits, governments, forms of worship; their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements and acquirements, the impotent conclusion of long-standing facts, the tokens, so faint and broken, of a superintending design, the blind evolution of what turn out to be great powers or truths, the progress of things, as if from unreasoning elements, not towards final causes, the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race, so fearfully yet so exactly described in the apostle's words,

* Quoted in Greg's 'Enigmas of Life,' p. 192.

† "La grandeur de l'homme est grande en ce qu'il se connaît misérable. Un arbre ne se connaît pas misérable. . . . Toutes ces

misères-là prouvent sa grandeur. Ce sont misères de grand seigneur, misères d'un roi dépossédé. . . . Car qui se trouve malheureux de n'être pas roi, sinon un roi dépossédé."

'having no hope, and without God in the world,'—all this is a vision to dizzy and appal; and inflicts on the mind a sense of profound mystery, which is absolutely beyond human solution.

"What shall be said to this heart-piercing, reason-bewildering fact? I can only answer, that either there is no Creator, or this living society of men is in a true sense discarded from his presence. Did I see a boy of good make and mind, with the tokens upon him of a refined nature, cast upon the world without provision, unable to say whence he came, his birth-place or family connections, I should conclude that there was some mystery connected with his history, or that he was one of whom, from one cause or another, his parents were ashamed. Thus only should I be able to account for the contrast between the promise and the condition of his being. And so I argue about the world: *if* there be a God—*since* there is a God—the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity. It is out of joint with the purposes of its Creator. This is a fact, a fact as true as the fact of its existence; and thus the doctrine of what is theologically called original sin becomes to me almost as certain as that the world exists, and as the existence of God." *

If there is a remedy for this tremendous dislocation, impossible as it must be to anticipate its nature, it must be one adequate to the greatness of the disaster. † And

* Newman, 'Apologia,' p. 377. Compare Pascal: "Le nœud de notre condition prend ses retours et ses replis dans cet abîme. De sorte que l'homme est plus inconcevable sans ce mystère que ce mystère n'est inconcevable à l'homme."—Faugère, ii. 155.

See a passage in Vinet's 'Nouvelles Études évangéliques,' p. 51:—"Le nombre de nos

misères, leur gravité, leur perpétuel retour n'ont laissé de choix aux esprits méditatifs qu'entre deux suppositions terribles: ou le monde est disputé par un bon et un mauvais génie, ou il doit y avoir au fond de notre histoire un épouvantable mystère."

† "L'incarnation montre à l'homme la grandeur du remède qu'il a fallu."

this disaster is the fundamental supposition of that religion of which the Bible is the record, and the Christian Church the creation and witness. It rests on two great foundations; a great verity of history, experience, and consciousness, man's double nature, his heights and depths, his worth, and his worthlessness, the inexplicable fact of sin and all its consequences;—and a great disclosure which none could make but God, that man's delivery and restoration are dear to his Maker, that for man's sake the Highest was joined to the lowest, Divine Power and Love to earthly degradation and pain; the Cross of Christ was the Passion and Sacrifice of the Son of God. Christianity satisfies the conditions which it ought to satisfy, if it is a religion for the world, a religion to demand the attention of a serious man. It is not bound to tell us everything; it need not clear up all difficulties. It must not be a privilege for an aristocracy of thinkers. But it must be a full counterpart to all those great and grave facts in which all men have a share, which make up our perplexity and our misery, and yet impel us to hope. This to Pascal's mind was the decisive point. He felt that the external appearances of a divine sanction in the case of Christianity were so ample and so strongly proved, relatively to the conditions of all our knowledge, as to satisfy his reason; and his review of these converging and cumulative proofs, incompletely developed as we have it, shows with what originality and depth he had mastered the argument. But he wanted, and he found, more than this. For him, beyond the satisfaction of his critical reason, the overwhelming certainty of religion arose out of its deep and manifold correspondence with what he knew of himself and man; with what conscience told him of the moral law, and the world showed him of degradation and sin. It was not only that its credentials could bear the strain of

enquiry; what brought religion home to his inward sense of reality was that it had the key to the tormenting contradictions of nature, which he knew so well. And so with the difficulties attending it. The facts of experience, as well as the suppositions of religion, make it part of the disorder of the world that moral obstacles to truth are as great as intellectual ones. If religion is what it claims to be, it cannot but be a trial of hearts, a test of character and affections; it must be the greatest choice that a man can make or refuse, if the choice is offered him; it must take its place by right, first and foremost among the great things that belong to our moral life. If it is a gift to the unworthy, a gift from Him whose disproportion to man is infinite, a gift of His mercy and remedial lovingkindness to their misery and despair, it is a thing which must be received on its own terms, and with the knowledge that the passions, the worldliness, the indolence of men are its natural rivals and antagonists. Men complain that the tokens of God are indistinct and equivocal; what is this but an exaggeration of the warning of the Bible itself that its God is a "God that hideth Himself"—"*Deus absconditus*"—"hideth Himself" from idle curiosity and unwilling hearts; a warning to remember that the very starting-point of the Gospel is, that man, who was made for God, has lost God, and that the moral separation between God and man accounts for his not finding a God whom he does not care for, whom he does not love, from whom he shrinks. The danger, the plain, but terrible certainty, that met Pascal's eye was, that men, while examining the claims of religion and its reasonableness, forgot the tremendous responsibilities of its judges. He who knew so well what intellect *could* do, knew what it *could not* do; and he knew that the decision in such a matter as religion lay not merely with the intellect alone, but with the whole complex

nature of man. He knew the solemn truth that in the will, the affections, the conscience of man lay that which determined his creed, his character, his fate. To Pascal no religion could mean anything, or be anything, but one such as that described in the earliest hymns which welcomed the Gospel; one which "visited" men like "the dayspring from on high, through the tender mercy of our God, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace"—one which can call forth from man the thanksgiving, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour For He that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is His name." Pascal, too, looking at the longings, the agony of creation, looking at the long roll of God's "noble works," has his Magnificat: 'Therefore I stretch forth my arms to my Deliverer, who, after having been foretold for 4000 years, hath come at last to suffer and to die for me, at the time and with all the circumstances predicted of Him; and by His grace I wait for death in peace, in the hope of being united to Him for ever; and I live meanwhile rejoicing, whether in the good things which it pleaseth Him to give me, or in the evils which He sends me for my good, and which He has taught me to endure by His example.'*

And now, how does such a book, a book of conflict, so suggestive of intellectual perplexities and troubles, serve as a 'Companion for the Devout Life'? How does it help devotion, the habits and behaviour of the soul in what it has consciously to do with its God?

1. It does so by deepening the grounds of devotion, by elevating the level of religious thought, and enlarging its horizon. Devotion, to be kept pure, needs

* 'Pensées,' ed. Faugère, ii. 198.

ideas as well as feelings. Its life and energy, doubtless, are in the affections; love, reverence, trust, joy, hope, praise. But, as in a family, love is everything, yet love may run in poor and ill-directed and unworthy channels, and we ought to cultivate worthy and fitting ways for the exercise and training of our family affections, so it is in devotion. God will accept the true devotion of the most slenderly furnished soul, of the narrowest mind, of the most mistaken sincerity; but affection and thought, feeling and truth, ought to have their just proportion to one another. On our knees, we need to remember the deep abysses of judgment and mercy in which the foundations of our prayers are laid. We need to keep our mind in with the sense of what is real, and therefore must be so serious, in the familiar things which come before us in every prayer. There are two dangers to which devotion is exposed: it is in danger of becoming formal and uninterested, a sleepy routine; it is in danger too of becoming artificial, fanciful, petty, of wasting itself in the unchastened flow of feelings and words, of sinking into effeminacies and subtleties and delicate affectations of sentiment and language. This is no fault of Christian devotion, it is the fault of the weaknesses of our affections, of the impurities and alloys even of our humility, our tenderness, our love. But there *is* the danger; and I can imagine nothing better calculated to rebuke and correct all these "shows of religion" than Pascal's clear, downright seriousness, and the startling boldness with which he faces the real facts of life and religion. It is all the more striking, that the book is not a finished work for the public use, but a collection of fragments which he never expected us to see, in which we surprise him, as it were, in private, putting down his thoughts as they come, not for others but for himself, to test and clear and ascertain his own ideas. The great themes which we are accus-

tomed to in the consecrated language of the church or the oratory—man's fall and redemption, his needs, his strength, his law, his hope, are here the subject of an appeal to men's common sense and judgment, by a layman speaking to laymen. He wakens us up to see the real import of our sacred oracles, by translating them into the language of modern life, and that in one of its most cultivated and perfect forms. And again, the great commonplaces of human life, which are the property of the moralist as much as of the preacher, he teaches us to interweave with our prayers. Others besides him have dwelt on the strange contrarieties of human nature. Montaigne has done so with all his subtle observation and irony. Dryden did so with his terrible strength of scorn. Pope, in memorable lines, almost paraphrased Pascal.* But it is one thing to make these tremendous antitheses the ornaments of a brilliant work of art, and quite another to contemplate them before the Cross of Christ. Pascal writes of them with the continuous sense of their practical recoil upon himself; he writes of them in the face of God, and death. A thread of the deepest devotion runs through the book: the great reasoner, the accomplished writer, was the humblest and most fervent of worshippers, meditating on the agony of Christ, praying for the right use of pain and sickness, giving rapturous thanks for having found his peace in God. Agree with Pascal or not, you cannot help learning from him *what it is* to think nobly and adequately of the great questions of religion; you cannot help feeling with him that there are in them depths hard to sound, disasters and hopes which none can dare to make light of. It is difficult not to feel shame, in turning from these pages, so grand

* Cf. 'Essay on Man,' ii. 1-34, with the passage, "Quelle chimère est-ce donc que l'homme," &c., ed. Faugère, ii.

in their largeness and precision of thought, their burning and vivid convictions, their simplicity of expression, to our trite and mean conceptions, our contented apathy of prayer, our stilted and empty pomp of phrase, our thin and childish excitement; to feel the strength with which he has seized the amazing wonders both of our condition and of God's remedy—"Say what you will," he writes, "there is something in the Christian religion which is astonishing" *—and then to come back to the superficial apprehension of them, with which we are, so many of us, satisfied, even in our attempts to lift soul and life out of the common grooves of custom.

2. I think the book has another use. If ever there were days which needed bracing and sobering lessons, they are ours. They need it all the more, because in that civilization which affects us all, and which in so many of its results is in such contrast with the ultimate certainties of life as well as with the spirit of religion, there is so much to call forth admiration and gratitude, so much that is beneficent, excellent, noble. But many of us it certainly weakens, it certainly spoils, it certainly blinds. We sweep along in constant smoothness and order; we lose our bearings amid the intoxication of new knowledge, and the consciousness of new powers. We see but a portion of the field; out of the range of our sight are the miserable and the hopeless, a great army, who cannot understand the philosophy of optimism or the blessings of progress. And we who do, almost resent such eloquence as Pascal's; it seems to us overcharged and unnatural; we accuse him of the perverseness of painting life in colours unjustly and falsely dark. His severity is not *all* the truth. Many

* "On a beau dire, il faut avouer que la religion chrétienne a quelque chose d'étonnant."

happily have found—I ought to say, have been granted—a sweetness, a liberty, an innocence, a tranquillity in living, or else a generous and pure delight in toil, which Pascal could not discover. But his severe view is a great side of the truth. It is a side which has impressed some of the greatest of mankind. It is an echo of *his* experience who said, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” It is the tradition of the conflicts and temptations which have befallen those who have thought most deeply and felt most keenly, those who have wrestled most stoutly with the evil of their day. If our devotional life is to be the charm with which we may walk safely through so much that is threatening, if our prayers are not to be unmeaning ones, we need in them the tonic of these stern truths. Pascal’s austere thoroughness and masculine plainness of speech is very useful to remind us when on our knees that neither life nor religion are the easy and soft things we sometimes take them to be; that, be appearances what they may, there are close at hand to us, every day, contingencies too terrible to speak of; there are, at any rate, in the end, dread certainties which nothing can avert. With our calm days of order and peace, and our eager ones of triumph, amid the joys of companionship and joint effort, the successive achievements of power, the blessings of our homes, it will one day be a happy thing for us to have reminded ourselves of Pascal’s solemn and pathetic words: “The last act is always tragedy.”* “I shall die alone”—“*On mourra seul.*”

3. Lastly, no professed master of the spiritual life, no book of practical piety, ever laid down more distinctly the true method of seeking religious light. It is

* “Le dernier acte est sanglant, quelque belle que soit la comédie en tout le reste.”

implied in every line of Pascal, that truth in religion is absolutely, and from the very nature of the case, dependent on moral purity and faithfulness. "Revelation," as has been said, "was not given to satisfy doubts, but to make us better men, and it is as we become better men that it becomes light and peace to our souls, even though to the end of life we shall find difficulties in it and in the world around us."* It is the great warning of Pascal, that, if men would find and know God, they must begin by trying to do His will; they must act according to the greatness of the occasion, and to the laws not of one part only but of their whole human nature; they must prepare their souls, habits and tempers and will, as well as intellect. God, the only God worth seeking by man, the God, not of scientific demonstration or theory,† but the living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Jesus Christ, is revealed only to the heart, the heart of the sincere, the modest, the patient, the self-governed, the loving. And as children who cannot walk learn to walk by walking, so we learn to feel the meaning and greatness of moral truth by acting under the sense of it, by listening in detail to conscience, by being true to what we hear in great things and small. No one ever insisted more earnestly than Pascal that, to know, we must obey. No one reminds as more impressively of the silent power of habits as they grow up, unwatched and unfelt: how, when we are trifling with self-discipline and prayer, we are laying the foundation of religious perplexity and trouble, clouding the inward eye and enfeebling the moral taste, our power of insight and judgment, our power of *keeping* the sight of truth which once was given us.

* Newman, 'Parochial Sermons,' i. Sermon 18.

† 'Pensées,' ed. Faugère, ii. 113-116.

These are not unfitting lessons to carry with us when we retire to recollect ourselves with God. How great a book that is on which we have been commenting, I need not say. The world is agreed on the marvellous gifts which it discloses. But that clearness and penetration of reason, that easy strength, that height and nobleness of thought which captivate our intelligence, that music of expression which charms our ear, are but foils to what is most essential and characteristic in it. It is a book which none can read, friend or enemy, without having it impressed on him that that which drew up this mighty soul to its full height was the ever present vision of a God of righteousness and love, the reaching after the light of perfect goodness. That is what is shown in these reflections from its thoughts and feelings, broken and imperfect as they are. They show an enthusiasm which even in its excess is heroic, for all that had the reality of moral excellence. They show one who was ready to count all things but loss for the sake of that Love, that Cross, which had revealed man's true perfection to man—not riches only, and pleasures, and honour and power, but greater things than these, the magnificent triumphs of intelligence, the joys of the discoverer, the glory and the delights of the pure reason. They show one alive to all greatness and all beauty, moulded for sympathy and for all delicate and all tender affections, to whom all was forgotten in the blaze of the glory of Christ's compassion; to whom, above all beauty, was the beauty of Charity, above all greatness, the greatness of Charity—that Charity which Jesus Christ first made known among men. Such a book is no unsuitable 'Companion for the Devout Life.'



ST. FRANCIS OF SALES'

'INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE.'



Holy living an art, in which methodical instructions, as well as Scriptural principles, are needed—Contrast between the tone of 'The Introduction' and that of 'The Spiritual Combat'—Occasion and avowed object of the work—Part i. might be used as a manual for Catechumens previously to Confirmation—Defectiveness of part ii. on the subject of God's Word—The excellence of the method of meditation recommended by St. Francis—Part iii. inferior to Taylor's 'Holy Living' in its catalogue and arrangement of the Christian virtues—Reasons why faith does not enter into this catalogue—Taylor's Chapter on Faith considered—St. Francis's salutary warning as to unity of effort in the cultivation of the virtues—Favourable contrast presented by part iv. of 'The Introduction' to Taylor's 'Holy Living'—Francis's beautiful reflections on "spiritual dryness"—Part v. deals with the subject of renewing our holy purposes, and might be used with advantage as a manual for retreats—The central thought of the treatise is "Peace as the foundation of the spiritual life"—This shown by the author's reflections on "Unquietness," on "Meekness towards ourselves," on the method of conducting business, on the method of subduing anger, and on the drawbacks to the spiritual life arising from *empressement*—Quietism, and the resolving of all legitimate prayer into prayer of acquiescence, are the exaggeration and caricature of this leading idea—Compatibility of shortcomings in the treatise with its wonderful power of influencing for good—Possibility of the highest spiritual attainments, even in modern times, by the blood and grace of Christ.



IN showing the value and necessity of such treatises as that which is now under review, our fundamental position

List of Works referred to in the following Discourse.

- A. Œuvres complètes de Saint François de Sales, Evêque et Prince de Genève. Perisse Frères, Lyon et Paris, 1859. [B.]

must be that holy living is an art of arts. The science upon which this art is built is contained in Holy Scripture. Broad far-reaching principles of duty are there laid down, and the motives, which are the animating soul of duty, are clearly exhibited. But he who earnestly resolves to lead a holy life will soon find himself in want of some more methodical instructions than it is the province of Holy Scripture to give. Nor is this the smallest disparagement to that precious volume of Inspiration, which is indeed profitable, not for doctrine alone, but also for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. As Nature is all-

B. *L'Esprit du bien-heureux François de Sales, Évêque de Genève, représenté en plusieurs de ses actions et paroles remarquables, recueillies de quelques sermons, exhortations, conférences, conversations, livres et lettres de M. Jean-Pierre Camus, Évêque de Belley.* Paris, Gaume Frères, 1840.

C. *An Introduction to a Devout Life.* Written originally in *French*, by *S. Francis de Sales*, Bishop and Prince of *Geneva*. Faithfully rendered into English. To which is prefix'd a Summary of his Life, and adjoynd a Collection of his choicest Maxims. In the Close is added the Communication of *Dr. Thaulerus* with a Poor Beggar, teaching us to resign our selves in all things to the good Pleasure of God.

London, Printed by *Henry Hills*, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, for his Houshold and Chappel, for *Mat. Turner* at the Lamb in High Holbourn. 1686.

D. *S. Francis de Sales*, Bishop and Prince of *Geneva*. By the Author of '*A Dominican Artist*,' '*Life of Madame Louise de France*,' etc. etc.

"Je veux peu de choses, ce que je veux, je veux fort peu."

New Edition. 1872.

E. *The Spirit of S. Francis de Sales*, Bishop and Prince of *Geneva*, by *Jean Pierre Camus*, Bishop of *Belley*. Translated by the Author of '*Life of S. Francis de Sales*,' '*A Dominican Artist*,' etc. etc. 1872.

F. *The Spiritual Combat*, together with the Supplement and the Path of Paradise, by *Laurence Scupoli*. *A New Translation.* 1875.

G. *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living.* By *Jeremy Taylor*, D.D., Bishop of *Down and Connor*, and *Dromore*. 1873.

sufficient for the uses of our natural life, and furnishes every resource of which man, even in the highest state of civilisation, stands in need, so is Holy Scripture all-sufficient for the uses of spiritual life, furnishing somewhere or other in its ample and varied scope remedies for spiritual disease, safeguards against spiritual dangers, and counsels for such spiritual perfection as it is possible to attain upon earth. But something in the department of human skill and industry (themselves gifts of God as much as Nature is) is clearly necessary to meditate between the resources of Nature and the wants of men,—to make the first applicable to the second. A man turned loose upon the fields to provide himself with food and shelter would make but a sorry shift, unless he knew something of agriculture and building. And by analogy in the spiritual world, while it is easy to contemplate the beauties of Holy Scripture, and theoretically to appreciate its counsels without any other help than itself the moment we come to address ourselves to practice, to turn our knowledge into action, and to seek for the attainment of Christian virtue, we find the need of some methodical and systematised instructions, drawn from the Scriptures by the skill and research of devout men, and to which their own spiritual experience has contributed warmth, colour, and reality. This is only saying in another form that God has given us not the Scripture only, but also a living Church which has a Prophetical Office—not only a written Word, but a ministry thereof.

But if holy living be an art, it follows that it must be studied as an art, and that little progress can be expected to be made in it except under the conditions which are annexed to progress in any other art. The study must be methodical as well as the text-book, since perfection cannot be in any art attained by mere fitful and casual application to it; we must begin at the beginning, and not attempt the more advanced instructions until we

have duly mastered the rudiments; and above all—O great encouragement to the Christian soul which sincerely desires to acquire this art!—we must not be discouraged by frequent failures in our earlier attempts, and by our falling miserably below the high ideal at all times, but make the attempt again and again, with ever buoyant hope and sanguine augury that through the blood and grace of Christ perseverance will by-and-by be crowned with success. How much assiduous previous training is necessary before a would-be draughtsman is qualified to draw from Nature! And when he is so qualified, how is sketch after sketch thrown away or torn up as a failure, of which he has rather reason to be ashamed! And shall we suppose that a moral endeavour, or a series of moral endeavours, will be at once successful, which has for its object nothing less than the copying of the features of Christ's character into our own heart and soul?

Those who regard holy living as an art, and are prepared to study it under the conditions to which the study of every art is subjected, will find in the vast field of Christian literature many manuals of great service to them, but none, we venture to think, so winning, so attractive, and of such universal applicability as St. Francis of Sales' 'Introduction to the Devout Life.' Camus, Bishop of Belley, who did for Francis what Boswell did for Johnson,* recording his table-talk with a copious-

* Camus was, at the early age of twenty-six, consecrated Bishop of Belley (the see adjoining that of Geneva, on the south-western side), by Francis of Sales. This established an intimacy between the two prelates which has resulted in our having a much more intimate acquaintance with the character of Francis than we could have gained in any other way.

See a short interesting notice of Camus in D, chap. vii. p. 181, and a much longer one in B, tome i. pp. xxi.-cxiv. The writer of the first of these gives the exact impression of him derived from the 'Esprit,' when she says (p. 183), "One cannot but picture him to oneself as a restless, somewhat fidgety personage."

ness of detail which places the character of the saint before our eyes in a manner much more lively than the most elaborate biography could do, tells us, in a passage of the ‘*Esprit de St. François de Sales*,’ that the germ of all the teaching in the ‘*Introduction*’* is to be found in ‘*The Spiritual Combat*’ of Laurence Scupoli, a book which Francis prized above all other spiritual treatises, calling it his director, his dear book, his favourite book, and telling Madame de Chantal† that he had carried it in his pocket for eighteen years, and never re-read it without profit. But whatever relation may exist between the two works, we think it will be universally admitted that Francis’s is the more attractive of the two. Scupoli’s is a stern book in comparison; its fundamental idea, that of combat, tended to bring out the antagonistic side of the Christian life; and it is wanting in those numerous illustrations with which the ‘*Introduction*’ is flowered, and which, if it must be admitted that a treatise is more nervous and sinewy without them than with them, do yet smooth the reader’s path for him and lure him onwards. Francis’s one secret in dealing with souls—a secret which he was sometimes found fault with for carrying to a vicious excess,—was to win by love rather than to terrify by fear. “More flies are caught by a spoonful of honey‡ than by a whole barrel of vinegar,” he would say; and, in pursuance of this and similar maxims, he has made his

* See E, p. 44, and B, tome premier, p. 165, partie iii. section xii.

† See A, tome troisième, p. 154. col. i. lettre cxix.

‡ “The saintly Bishop went so far as to say that it is better to withhold a deserved rebuke than to administer it ungraciously, and that judicious silence was far preferable to the truth roughly

told. ‘You will catch more flies with a spoonful of honey than with a whole barrel of vinegar!’ he used to say; and ‘No sauce was ever spoilt by sugar!’ ‘Human nature is so formed that it always hardens itself against rigorous dealings, but yields to gentleness. Reproof is bitter in itself, and only loving-kindness can make it palatable.’”—D, p. 190.

treatise as inviting as possible to the reader, decking and variegating it with similes which, if sometimes quaint, are always beautiful. In profuseness of imagery, he is a very Jeremy Taylor.

And yet in another point he is strongly and favourably contrasted with Taylor. Francis is brief and terse; Taylor is prolix and diffuse. Francis, true to his principle of attracting at all hazards, objected to length* in religious discourses; and he has acted on this principle in his 'Devout Life,' in which, perhaps, more of valuable counsel is compressed into a very short compass than in any other work of the kind.

This great treatise, of which Marie de Médicis showed her estimation by causing a copy of it, bound in gold and gems,† to be sent to James I. of England, and which many a soul, both Catholic and Protestant, has learned by experience to prize above gold and gems, had its origin in certain advices‡ given by Francis to a lady who had been turned from a life of worldliness by his ministry at Paris, and had placed herself under his guidance. These advices he had from time to time committed to writing, and left them with her when his duties called him away from Paris to his diocese of Geneva. The new director under whom she placed herself after the departure of Francis, perceiving the singular excellence of these memoranda, wrote to him to request their publication. About the same time a request reached him from Henry IV. of France, to the effect "that he would write a book

* "Believe me," he would say, "I speak from long experience; the more you say, the less people will remember; and the less you say, the more they will profit. Those who load their hearers' memory destroy it, just as you put out a lamp by filling it too full, or kill

plants by unmeasured watering. When a discourse is too long, the end makes one forget the middle, and the middle puts out the beginning."—E, p. 347.

† See D, p. 172.

‡ See D, pp. 169–172.

concerning true religion, such as should set it forth in its rightful beauty, and show the world that holiness of life was not incompatible with a busy, active career, whether at court or in the province, amid the whirl of affairs or the claims of society, a holiness alike free from repulsive severity and treacherous laxity."

Francis, regarding the king's request, concurring as it did with that of the director, as a providential indication of God's will in the matter, threw his loose memoranda into shape and compiled them into a treatise, giving it the modest name of an 'Introduction to the Devout Life.' Even if the work were not from the pen of so great a master in the spiritual life, the origin and design of it would give it a certain value. For it had its source, not in any theory of Christian virtue and of the method of attaining it, but in the actual guidance of a living soul. The memoranda out of which it was framed were drawn up originally with a view to a particular case, and were in the main answers to questions and difficulties which had arisen in the course of Christian experience. Such an origin would give to any devotional work a reality which it could not otherwise possess; for, "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." The spiritual experience of one soul greatly resembles that of another, and the pastoral guidance which is sound and profitable for one will be sure, when made the common property of the Christian world, to meet the wants of others. And while its origin ensures reality, its design gives it an universal applicability. It was not written for the guidance of the contemplative and the recluse, but of those who, while constrained to live in the world, yet earnestly desire to be kept from its evil. "My intent," says Francis in his Preface,* "is to instruct such as

* C, Author's Preface, § 2.

live in towns, in families, in the Court, and are by their condition obliged to a public life; who very often, under the colour of a pretended impossibility, will not so much as think of undertaking a devout life. . . . And to them I make it appear that, as the mother pearls live in the sea without receiving one drop of salt water; as toward the *Chelidonian* Islands there are fountains of fresh water in the midst of the sea; and as the fire-fly flies in the flames without burning its wings: so a vigorous and constant soul may live in the world without participating of any worldly humour; may find out springs of sweet piety amid the brackish waters of secular affairs; and fly among the flames of earthly concupiscences without burning the wings of the sacred desires of a devout life." So that those well-known words of the Christian poet might form an appropriate motto to the work:—

"We need not bid, for cloister'd cell,
Our neighbour and our work farewell,
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky:
The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask;
Room to deny ourselves; a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God."

The arrangement of the work is very lucid and simple. The first part, presupposing the existence of good desires in the soul, aims at leading it forward to a formal consecration of all its powers and faculties to God's service, in short, to a renewal of the Baptismal Vow. The means offered for bringing the good desires to this good effect are ten brief but very edifying Meditations on such topics as "The end for which we were created," "Sin," "Death," "Judgment," "Hell," and "Paradise." The solemn Protest, in which these Meditations are made to issue, is to be read over before

the priest after a general confession, and previously to receiving absolution from him.

It strikes us that this part might be turned to very good account if detached from the body of the work, and put forth separately as a Manual for Catechumens previously to Confirmation. It is in the period of adolescence, when the frivolities of childhood are outgrown, and yet the heart retains something of its early freshness and susceptibility, it is then more especially that those good desires make their appearance which Francis calls "the flowers of the heart,"* and the blossoming of which he says is the symptom that we should prune our consciences from dead works, so that they may bring forth fruit to God. The Meditations which he prescribes are not only admirably adapted to deepen and fix any religious impressions which might be made upon the mind of the young when preparing for Confirmation; they would serve the equally important purpose of a discipline for the work of meditation in general. One chief reason why this work presents so many difficulties to us all is, that it is not made to form any part of our early spiritual training. The Meditations of the 'Introduction' might be made the text-book, by a judicious use of which young people of moderate intelligence and devotion might be inured in their early years to a practice, which they would find to be of the utmost value in their subsequent spiritual course. A very few and obvious omissions and alterations, which would not at all touch the core of the argument, would remove everything distinctively Romish, and adapt this first part to the use of Catechumens in our own or any other communion of Christendom.

We cannot leave this part of the work before us

* C, part i. chap. v. pp. 24, 25.

without observing the spirituality of the definition of devotion, which the author lays down at the outset. Devotion, he tells us, consists not in fastings, nor in almsgivings, nor in heaping up prayers upon prayers, and accumulating a catalogue of religious observances (if these were the essential elements of devotion, who would be so devout as the Pharisee of the parable?); rather devotion is the love of God intensified, that fervent surrender of the heart and will to Him which not only does Him service, but delights and rejoices in doing it. "Charity * and Devotion differ no more one from the other than fire from flame: for charity is a spiritual fire, which, when it is well kindled, is called devotion; so that devotion adds nothing to the fire of charity save the flame, which renders charity cheerful, active, and diligent, not only in the observance of God's commandments, but also in the practice of heavenly counsels and inspirations." And again: "If charity be † milk, devotion is the cream; if charity be a plant, devotion is the flower; if charity be a precious stone, devotion is its lustre; if charity be a rich balm, devotion is its odour,—yea the odour of sweetness, which comforts men and rejoices angels."

Part II. treats of the means of grace, as the instrumentality for attaining the Christian virtues. The method of meditation is explained in detail, though with great brevity; short forms of morning and evening devotion are given; instructions for attendance upon the different ordinances of religion, as the Roman Church has received and practises them; and, among the rest, directions for the hearing and reading of God's Holy Word, though unhappily, and in sad consistency with the genius of Romanism, which has ever shown

* C, part i. chap. i. p. 7.

† C, part i. chap. ii. p. 13.

itself jealous of trusting the people with the Scriptures, the chapter* which is headed thus contains no allusion whatever to any book of the Bible. Francis's own mind was thoroughly imbued with Holy Scripture, and his writings abundantly testify to the savour and relish which it had for his spiritual palate. And yet so completely is he the victim of a timid and mischievous system that he can write a chapter on "How we ought to hear and read God's Holy Word," without sending his disciple to any purer sources of that Word than Bonaventura, Blosius, Augustine, Jerome, and the 'Lives of the Saints.' Our own Bishop Taylor, in his 'Holy Living,' has a chapter† headed in the same way, which exhibits a curious and interesting contrast, and may supplement the grievous deficiencies of Francis's teaching in respect of the Word of God. Yet, this great defect notwithstanding, this second part of the treatise is not the least masterly, nor the least characteristic of the author's mind, nor the least edifying. His chapter on "Spiritual Recollection"‡ can be called nothing less than lovely; more than almost any other writer, Francis has the happy art of clothing what he recommends in the most winning colours, and making it amiable and attractive. Witness this passage, in which he advocates frequent daily retreats into the closets of the heart, for the purpose of refreshing ourselves by a brief communion with the Saviour: "As birds have their nests upon trees to retire to, when they

* C, part ii. chap. xvii. p. 186.

† "The Word of God is all those commandments and revelations, those promises and threatenings, the stories and sermons recorded in the Bible: nothing else is the Word of God that we know of by any certain instrument. The good books and spiritual discourses, the sermons or homilies

written or spoken by men, are but the word of men, or rather explications of, and exhortations according to, the Word of God; but of themselves they are not the Word of God. In a sermon, the text only is in a proper sense to be called God's Word," &c.—G, chap. iv. § iv. p. 193.

‡ C, part ii. chap. xii. p. 154.

are weary ; and deer have bushes and thickets wherein to hide and shroud themselves, and to take the cool of the shade in the summer ; even so, *Philothea*, should our hearts choose out every day some place, either upon Mount *Calvary*, or in the wounds of our Redeemer, or in some other place near Him, there to make our spiritual retreat upon every occasion, there to recreate and refresh ourselves amidst the turmoils of exterior affairs, and there to be as in a castle, to defend ourselves against temptations." Or this, in which the recognition of our Lord's life and death as the one subject on which the soul must feed by meditation, is enough, one would think, to remove the prejudices of the staunchest Protestant.

"But,* above all, I recommend to you mental and cordial prayer, and especially that which has for its subject the life and passion of our Lord ; for beholding Him often by meditation, your soul will be filled with Him, you will learn His carriage, and frame your actions according to the model of His. He is the Light of the world ; it is then in Him, and by Him, and for Him, that we must be guided and illuminated. He is the Tree of desire, under the shadow of which we must refresh ourselves. He is the living Fountain of *Jacob*, to wash away all our stains. In fine, as little children, by hearing their mothers and by prattling with them, learn to speak ; so we, conversing with our Saviour by meditation, and observing His words, His works, and His affections, shall soon by help of His grace learn to speak, work, and will like Him. We must stop here, *Philothea* ; and believe me, we cannot go to God the Father but through this gate : for even as the looking-glass cannot terminate our sight unless the back be tinned or leaded ; so the Divinity could not well be

* C, part ii. chap. i. § 2, p. 112.

contemplated by us in this world, if it were not joined to the sacred humanity of our Saviour, whose life and death is the most proportionable, delightful, sweet, and profitable object we can choose for our ordinary meditation."

But it is the method of meditation proposed to the reader in this section of the work, which gives it its great practical value. There is here a nerve and a vigour, which counterbalances and acts as a corrective to what might be thought the too great lusciousness of the writer's general style. The great merit of the method is, that it gives just sufficient direction for the satisfactory conduct of the exercise, without overburdening the disciple with a number of minute rules, in the attempt to observe which the free action of the mind might be hampered. After the preparation, which consists of calling to mind God's presence (three or four methods of doing which are suggested), and invoking His aid, follow the considerations, which are the body of the exercise. Upon these arise certain affections and resolutions, which are its practical result. Then come the concluding devotions, and, last of all, what Francis calls the spiritual nosegay, the instruction for gathering which must be given in his own words, as it is so completely characteristic of his manner, and of the general tone of his treatise.* "To this I add that you should gather a little nosegay of devotion. My meaning is this. Such as have been walking in a pleasant garden go not willingly thence without gathering four or five flowers to smell to, and keep in their hands all the day after. Even so, when our mind has discoursed by meditation on some mystery, we should choose one, or two, or three points, which we have found most proper for our advancement, on which we must

* C, part ii. chap. vii. § 4, pp. 136, 137.

busy our mind, and spiritually smell to them all the rest of the day. And this must be done in the self-same place where we made our meditation, walking alone, and entertaining our thoughts some short time after."

Here, again, we cannot but think that the section of the work which treats of the subject of meditation, comprising at most eight or nine very short chapters, might be, with great advantage to the interests of true religion, published as a separate tract. And the editor might do good service by an appendix of his own, showing how the proposed method of meditation might be applied not only to theses and historical subjects, but also to passages of Holy Scripture drawn from various parts of the inspired volume. Reading the Bible is with Protestants the religious exercise which has taken the place of meditation. But too often, even with the right-minded and devout, the reading, partly from want of time, partly from reluctance to make the necessary mental effort, is simply reading; it does not go on to what the Collect calls, "marking, learning, and inwardly digesting;" attention only is exercised, and not thought. And, in order that the soul of the reader may be really brought into contact with the Word of God, thought there must be, not, indeed, speculative thought, which raises curious questions, and is stimulated by the sense of an intellectual difficulty, but the thought which aims only at edification, and recognises the heart as the organ by which alone both edification and real enlightenment can be received. Surely instructions might be framed to facilitate thought of this description; and a few patterns of meditations on different passages of Holy Scripture might be drawn up. And in doing this the method of meditation proposed in the 'Introduction' might be used as a platform to build upon.

The third and fourth parts may be called the body of the work, the third treating of the Christian virtues, the fourth of temptations and the method of meeting them. The virtues are not methodically arranged, nor very exhaustively treated; in both these respects 'The Devout Life' is inferior to Taylor's 'Holy Living,' which announces, as the foundation of this branch of the subject, that "Christian* morality, according to the Apostle's arithmetic, hath but these three parts: 1. Sobriety; 2. Justice; 3. Religion. For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.'" Having thus laid in Holy Scripture itself a sure foundation for that part of his work which describes the Christian virtues, Taylor is at once led, when he arrives at the last and most important division of his subject, to speak of faith,† that great seminal virtue of the Christian character. For the first thing that suggests itself to a religious teacher, when he has to dilate upon "living godly in this present world" (or, in other words, on our "duty towards God"), is of course faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." "My duty towards God," says the English Catechism, "is to believe in Him,"—such belief being the essential foundation, on which the two affections of primary obligation, fear and love, must be built,—"to believe in Him, to fear Him, and to love Him." Francis makes no mention of faith at all, either towards God or Christ. The *love* of God and Christ finds large room in his treatise, not indeed as an isolated virtue, but as a necessary ingredient of the Christian state of mind, which

* G, chap. ii. § 1, p. 47.

† Chap. iv. § 1, p. 169.

is always rising to the surface when that state of mind is reviewed or discussed. But on *faith* there is an absolute silence, which would be singular if a very slight acquaintance with Roman moral theology did not furnish the explanation of it. According to that moral theology,* the passive acceptance, which, as a general

* The nature of faith, according to the view taken of it by Roman theologians, is well exhibited in the 'Canones et Decreta Concilii Tridentini.' See, for example, chap. xv. of the Sixth Session, which is headed thus: "That by any mortal sin grace is lost, but not faith." "It is to be maintained that not only by infidelity (by which faith itself too is lost), but also by any other mortal sin whatever, the grace of justification, once received, is lost; for the doctrine of the divine law, which we must defend, excludes from the kingdom of God, not only infidels, but also such of the faithful as are fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, and all others who commit mortal sins, from which by the help of divine grace they might abstain, and for which they are separated from the grace of Christ." One of the Canons (xxviii.), founded on this "Decretum," is: "If any one shall say that when grace has been lost by sin, faith also is always lost at the same time; or that the faith which remains is not real faith, albeit not living; or that he who hath faith without charity is no Christian; let him be accursed."

The view usually taken by members of the Reformed Church of the faith which justifies is thus anathematized (Session vi. Canon xii.): "If any one shall say that

justifying faith is nothing else than trust in the Divine mercy, which remitteth sins for Christ's sake, or that it is that trust alone by which we are justified; let him be accursed."

The late Bishop O'Brien remarks in his 'Ten Sermons upon the Nature and the Effects of Faith' (London, 1833), note 1, that "whatever materials for collecting the views of the Romish Church upon the nature of faith may be supplied by the Decree and Canons of this Session" (of the Council of Trent, Sess. vi.) . . . "no explicit definition of faith is to be found in either. Bellarmine, however, supplies the defect, and I suppose may be received as sufficient authority on the subject. Their divines, he tells us, '*fidem historicam, et miraculorum, et promissionum, unam et eandem esse docent; atque illam unam non esse proprie notitiam aut fiduciam, sed assensum certum atque firmissimum, ob auctoritatem primæ veritatis, et hanc unam esse fidem justificantem.*'—*De Just.* l. i. cap. 4."

By "*fides historica*," in the above extract from Bellarmine, is probably meant faith *in the narratives of Holy Scripture*—not such as we yield to ordinary history. For in the 'Catechism of the Council of Trent,' Cap. I. Quæst. i. p. 9, ed. Tauchnitz, Lipsiæ), where faith is defined as the faculty "whereby we yield a full assent to what is handed

rule, all professing Christians yield to the doctrines of Christianity, constitutes faith. If, therefore, you wish to find faith advocated and insisted upon, you must go to their apologetic theology. The atheist and the sceptic have need of faith, and must be brought to it by argument; but books of devotion are not written for atheists and sceptics, but for the spiritual furtherance and edification of those who accept without hesitation the whole circle of Revealed Truth, and who may be appealed to on the ground of any article of it, with a certainty that they will at all events admit the premiss. Hence in those to whom such books as 'The Introduction to the Devout Life' and 'The Spiritual Combat' are addressed, faith is presupposed. We of the Reformed Communions believe that faith, to be of any avail whatever, must be something far beyond a bare assent to doctrine upon competent authority,—that it must be such an assent as exerts a practical influence on the character, and works by stirring some of the affections,* fear, hope, or love. We hold faith in God and

down to us on divine authority," the faculty, "by virtue of which we hold that to be a settled point, which the authority of our Holy Mother the Church warrants to have been handed down by God," it is added: "Whence we perceive how great is the difference between this faith which we have in God, and *that which we give to the writers of human history.*" The section goes on to say that faith, though it differs in degree and worthiness (*magnitudine ac dignitate*), (to prove which last point these texts are adduced, "Faith without works is dead," and "The faith which worketh by love,") is yet the same in kind in all instances of it. From this, and the Canon above

quoted, it is evident that Roman divines make a point of maintaining that even *dead* faith is *real* faith. In so far, they have St. James on their side, who does not withhold from dead faith the name of faith. But how this dead faith "differs greatly" (in its nature) from belief in the narratives of profane history, and how the faith of mere intellectual conviction (such as the devils have) can be "the same in kind" with that of confidence and affection, which animates the saints, it is difficult to see.

* "The true meaning, therefore, of *faith in Christ*, or *in God through Christ*, is not merely or properly belief in the Scripture narrative concerning our Lord;

in Christ to be the first principle of all good in human character; and therefore for any Reformed divine to discuss the Christian virtues without mentioning faith, would indeed be to ignore the first rudiments of the subject, as it presents itself to our minds. Taylor consequently vindicates his claim to a place among the

or an assent of the understanding to certain propositions derived from that narrative, however true, and however important they be: but it is TRUST IN CHRIST, or IN GOD THROUGH CHRIST, founded upon such an assent; an entire and unreserved confidence in the efficacy of what Christ has done and suffered for us; a full reliance upon Him and His work."—O'Brien's 'Ten Sermons,' ed. 1833, Sermon I. p. 14.

And with more discrimination and accuracy (as it appears to the present writer) Professor Heurtley:—"Others make justifying faith to consist in *trust*. And trust indeed is inseparable from it; but so also are hope and fear, and other affections, according to the various objects about which it is conversant. If God's mercy in Christ Jesus be the object, then doubtless faith takes the form of trust; but if heaven and its eternal joys be the object, then it takes the form of desire or hope; or, if the dreadful consequences of falling from God be the object, then it takes the form of fear. And the like may be said of *obedience*, which is another word put by some into the definition of justifying faith. Obedience is the fruit of faith, and wherever faith is genuine, and time and opportunity are given, it will be sure to spring from it; but the two notions are perfectly distinct, nay so distinct, that to confound them goes nigh to subvert the

terms of the Gospel Covenant Thus then, though faith has its seat in the understanding, yet it avails nothing, *unless it pass from thence to the will and the affections* And as the faith by which we are justified influences the will and the affections, it must needs manifest itself, as circumstances arise, in the various acts which have their source in them. And hence it is not unfrequently spoken of as though it were identical with these acts, or rather with the habits from which they proceed though, if we would speak accurately, we must distinguish it from them."—Heurtley's 'Bampton Lectures on Justification,' Oxford, 1846, pp. 172, 173, 185.

In his thoughtful and interesting work on the 'Apostles' Creed' (London, 1842), the Rev. Thomas Griffith has a part in which he treats of "Belief of the Truth." His might stand for the view taken by Reformed divines in general. It is very exhaustive. "Belief" is defined as "I. An intelligent conviction of Truth. II. An hearty affection for Truth. III. A practical submission to Truth."

The reader will find the Roman and Reformed views of the nature of justifying faith, with the different shades of both, well set forth in Bishop Harold Browne's 'Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England,' Art. xi.

Reformed divines, by giving us in his 'Holy Living' a chapter on Faith, with several sections and subsections. Not that even Taylor, if we may venture to criticise so learned and so accomplished a divine, assigns to faith that altogether pre-eminent position which, as it seems to us, the New Testament claims for it. Faith, or at least the faith which is accounted unto man for righteousness, is the nerve and sinew of every virtue, and especially of self-sacrifice. This universal presence of it, then, in the highest acts of Christian virtue should be fully and fairly exhibited by every writer on moral theology. Taylor probably might have done better to exhibit the virtues, not in the order in which the Apostle mentions them, beginning with the lowest (sobriety) and working up to the highest (godliness), but in the converse order which would have carried him at once to faith, as the source of all good in man. For surely the natural order of Christian virtue is that it should begin with the highest relations of the soul, and thence flow down into its lower and more earthly conversation, "like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down unto the beard, even unto Aaron's beard, and went down to the skirts of his clothing." The first and great commandment must take precedence of, and give vitality to, the second, which is only like unto it. Ay, vitality. It was one of Francis's own choice maxims: * "We ought not to love our neighbour, either because he is virtuous, or because we hope he will be so, but because God commands us."

But while on the one hand, in discussing the Christian virtues, its evangelical pre-eminence should be assigned to faith, on the other these virtues should not all be merged in faith (as it has been too much the fashion to merge them in sermons and treatises of a certain school), but exhibited in distinct indi-

* C, Maxim 8, "Towards our neighbour."

viduality, and commended separately, each by itself, to the pursuit of Christians. The faith inculcated by a certain class of divines resembles Aaron's rod, which swallowed up the rods of Jannes and Jambres, and left nothing else of its own nature creeping upon the earth. But the faith commended to us in Holy Scripture is like the tree of life, a tree prolific of large variety, and serviceable for healing no less than nourishment, "which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." While, however, this variety of Christian virtues should be fully set forth, it is very important that the disciple should be warned against the distraction likely to arise from multiplicity of pursuit. And Francis gives this warning faithfully. At the beginning of his third part, he has two chapters* on the choice we ought to make in the exercise of virtues, not attempting to practise them all at once, but selecting one or two, as our vocation in life or our peculiar spiritual needs may dictate, for special cultivation, at all events for a season. Unity of effort is †

* C, pp. 221, 233.

† Unity of endeavour, as one secret of the attainment of virtue, is well set forth in a little work called 'Evening Thoughts, by a Physician' (London: Van Voorst, 1852), which is perhaps less generally known than it deserves to be. Thus the "Physician" writes on the subject of "Fixed Ideas" (p. 101).

"Men who are earnestly bent on any scientific investigation, or in carrying out any active scheme, political, benevolent, or personal, often give up their whole minds to it for a certain time. It becomes the fixed idea for months and years. . . . And how much real progress is made in this way.

In self-discipline, might it not be as well to follow a similar plan? Let one of the faults which most prominently rises before the introverted eye of the self-inspector be made the chief object of moral improvement for a certain fixed time. Endeavour to be unselfish for six weeks. Give half a year to the cure of wandering thoughts. Resist indulgence in day-dreams for a month. Cultivate entire purity of thought and feeling as the chief object for several weeks. Practise 'to listen and discourse for others' good' for a year. Let each choose for the object of this silent struggle that error of which he is most conscious."

essential to progress in the spiritual life; and greatly should we find ourselves forwarded, if we concentrated our prayers and endeavours for some time on one of those graces of the Christian character in which we find ourselves most deficient, not indeed dropping all but this, but rather subordinating other efforts to it. "It is profitable,"* says Francis, "that every one should choose a particular exercise of Christian virtue, not to abandon the rest, but to keep his mind in a more settled order and employment."

The fourth part treats, as we have said, of temptations, and of the method of meeting them. And as we have recently compared our author with Taylor, to the disadvantage of the former, so now on the other hand we cannot help observing as a singular and strange defect in 'The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living,' that the antagonistic side of the Christian life should be almost entirely overlooked in it. It is really impossible to estimate how much of reality, and therefore how much of persuasiveness, is lost to any treatise on Christian ethics by the mere absence of this feature. It is easy to give, and still easier to appreciate, a glowing description, decked out in poetical colours, of any number of virtues; but a soul which is to be really helped by a treatise of this sort wants not to admire but to practise, not to stand afar off and say, "How beautiful!" but to work virtue into the texture of its character. And the moment an honest attempt is made, not merely to admire but to exemplify the Christian graces, that moment is elicited all the antagonism which a corrupt heart, a godless world, and a legion of evil spirits, can offer. And therefore the chief question to which he who sincerely intends to put in practice the counsels of

* E, chap. ii. § 3, p. 17, and C, part iii. chap. i. § 6, p. 226.

a spiritual book needs an answer is, "How am I to deal with the opposition which is sure to arise from all quarters?" The late Bishop Bagot is said to have deeply impressed a congregation in Wells Cathedral by a very simple and unpretentious, but intensely experimental sermon on the great difficulty of being good. Everybody felt, as it was evident the preacher himself did, that, say what you will, and paint goodness as attractively as you please, it is very difficult. Now one of the principal things that a spiritual guide has to do, be he a living man, or a dead one who through the pages of a book "yet speaketh," is—not to hide the difficulties, but—to help us over them. And in proportion as he blinks them or slurs them over, just in that proportion is he unserviceable to us, and his work unreal. Francis, whose own favourite devotional work was Scupoli's 'Spiritual Combat,' was not likely to err in this direction. He has given us a whole book, consisting of fifteen chapters, on the subject of temptation, or rather on the antagonisms which arise in the Christian course. For it is observable how, in the latter part of the book, without however drawing any formal distinction, he passes from temptations proper to what we should rather call trials and crosses, such as unquietness, sadness, spiritual dryness and barrenness, "when it happens," to use his own words,* "that we are so destitute, and deprived of all sense of devotion, that we think our souls a wild, barren, fruitless field, in which there is neither path nor way to find God, nor any dew of grace to refresh us." After suggesting several causes which may have led to this comfortless state as a judicial infliction, such as spiritual indolence, the presumption begotten by spiritual favours, the glutting ourselves with worldly contentments and so forth, he

* C, part iv. chap. xiv. § 1, p. 597.

then adduces this topic of consolation, which both in itself, and in the illustration with which he garnishes it, is truly characteristic of his mind and style.

*“It is a great mistake made by many, and specially by women, to believe that the service we do to God without savour, without tenderness and sense of heart, is less agreeable to His Divine Majesty; since on the contrary our actions are like roses, which, though when they are fresh they have more beauty, yet when they are dry they have more strength and sweetness; for just so, though our works done with tenderness of heart are more acceptable to us—to us, I say, who consider only our own gratification—yet, when they are performed in time of dryness and barrenness, they have more sweetness and a better esteem in the presence of God. . . . The less there is of our particular interest in the pursuit of virtues, the more brightly shines our love to God, and the more pure it is. A child easily kisses his mother, when she gives him sugar; but it is a sign of greater love, if he kiss her after she has given him wormwood.”

The fifth and last part of the ‘Introduction’ instructs us in the necessity, and in the method, of solemnly renewing our holy purposes, in pursuance of the original written protestation, by which we dedicated ourselves to God’s service, according to the directions of the first part. “There is no clock,” says Francis,† “be it never so good, but must be wound up twice a day, morning and evening” (clock mechanism has made an advance since his time), “and at least once a year taken to pieces, to take away the rust it has gathered, to mend what is bent or broken, and to repair what is

* C, part iv. chap. xiv. § 10, p. 608, and § 11, p. 610.

† C, part v. chap. i. § 2, p. 621.

worn. So he that has a true care of his heart ought to wind it up to God evening and morning by the afore-said exercises, and moreover many times take a review of his state, redress and rectify it, and at least once a year take it to pieces, and examine diligently every part of it, that is, all the affections and passions of it, that all defects may be repaired. And as the clock-maker with some delicate oil anoints the wheels, the springs, and all the moving parts of his clock, that the motions may be more nimble, and the clock less subject to rust; so the devout person who has thus examined his heart, must, in order to renew it well indeed, anoint it with the sacraments of confession and the holy Eucharist. This exercise will repair your forces decayed by time, warm your heart, make your good resolutions return green, and your virtues blossom."

A certain time is to be set apart annually for a retreat. The original protestation, with the circumstances under which it was made, is then to be considered in all its points, and the prayers and thanksgivings which it may suggest are to be offered over it. This done, the soul is to examine itself in detail as to its relations towards God, itself, and its neighbour, and then on the state of its affections and desires. And then are to follow certain meditations suitable to the renewal of our good purposes, on such topics as the excellency of the soul, the excellency of the virtues, the examples of the saints, the love of Christ, the love of God,—all designed to issue in a solemn formal renewal of our act of self-dedication, which act was also preceded, as we remember, and led up to by a series of meditations. And thus this most methodical, as well as most beautiful, most winning, most persuasive work circles back again to the point from which it started, through a large variety of edifying sentiment, which, however profuse, is never diffuse, like some noble river

which, having taken its rise from the fountains of the great deep, meanders through the most diversified scenery, pasture and cornfield, forest and glade, and at length pouring itself into the ocean, and being lost there, mingles once more with the abyss of waters.

It is an evidence, we think, of the power and greatness of a book that considerable passages of it admit of being detached from the body of the work, and applied to separate uses. The work before us will quite stand such a test. We have shown that a most valuable Confirmation manual might be formed out of it, and that its instructions on meditation, extracted and published separately, might prove a great help in that difficult and yet most profitable exercise. And now we may add that the fifth part, or at all events the greater portion of it, might be most profitably used as a manual of preparation for the holy Communion, or, where that is received so often that it no longer constitutes a marked period in our Christian course, and any long preparation for it is out of the question, as a manual of devotion for a retreat,—for two or three days, that is, given up to seclusion from ordinary society and secular pursuits, with a view to recruit the flagging forces of the spiritual life by a more solemn, more detailed, more fervent intercourse with God than conversation in the world furnishes opportunities for. Members of the Reformed Church have of late seen more clearly, and admitted more frankly, that devout persons might find in annual retreats judiciously conducted, a real source of spiritual strength and a real means of spiritual progress; and accordingly in one form or another (and it is quite right that there should be many forms of them, adapted to the different exigencies and temperaments of different minds), they are creeping into our practice. In all forms of them, from the purely private retreat, on some anniversary of

mere private concern, up to the retreat which has a perfect ecclesiastical organisation, and in which the meditations are given, and every detail of the proceedings regulated, by the clergy, Francis of Sales' fifth part might be turned to good account; but it would chiefly serve for private retirements of this sort, for which indeed it was originally designed; and possibly (though this is a matter which each individual must decide for himself by his own experience), these private retirements, especially in places where daily access is given to the services of the church, might be found quite equally profitable with those which are ecclesiastically organised.

Having now reviewed rapidly the successive parts of this great work, it will be well for us, by way of giving unity to our subject, to consider what may be the fundamental principle of the moral theology set forth in it, what is the primary cell (to use an image drawn from vegetable growth) round which all Francis's precepts of holy living gather themselves and form. And here we at once come across the relation which such works as that before us bear to Holy Scripture. Just as every art is only an application of some force or secret of Nature to the purposes of human life, so every treatise of holy living is only an expansion and adaptation of some one great principle, which sometimes lies upon the surface, sometimes lurks in the recesses, of Holy Scripture. Thus, Scupoli's 'Spiritual Combat' is only an unfolding, into full blossom, of that wonderful passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians which sets forth the spiritual antagonists with whom the Christian is called upon to wrestle, and the panoply of God which he must take to him if he would come off victorious in the conflict. The fundamental thought of Francis's book is rather more recondite. We take

it to be one of the many precious and edifying thoughts, in which that gracious invitation of the Saviour, which is in itself a miniature Gospel, is so peculiarly rich: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This is the first rest to which the invitation summons the heavy laden, and it is a rest *given*, and in no sense *gained*. But the succeeding context promises another rest, which is in some sense gained;* for it is to be experienced by the soul in taking upon it the easy yoke and the light burden, and in learning of the meek and lowly-hearted Jesus.

Rest, then, is an absolutely essential ingredient in the Christian life. Peace given is its very foundation; peace both given, and in a certain sense gained, is concurrent with its whole course, and consummates it in Paradise. And is not this the ever-recurring thought of Francis's book, the thought which is always obtruding itself, and makes its presence ever felt, because it is always in the mind of the author? "Unquietness," † says he, in a chapter of the fourth part devoted to this subject (and he embraces explicitly that unquietness which is bred from a consciousness of our own spiritual maladies and shortcomings), "is the greatest evil that can come to the soul excepting sin . . . it is not a single temptation, but a spring from

* "This is the first rest—rest through the revelation of the Father, rest in the knowledge of God This is the second rest—the rest of the meek and lowly mind, 'the mind that is in Christ Jesus.'

"But how shall we attain this meek and lowly mind? It is the mind of sons, and we attain it by knowing the Father. His love, revealed in the heart, produces its own likeness there; His mercy

pacifies the conscience, and subdues the whole man before a forgiving God. Pride has no longer its accustomed place; our soul becomes like a weaned child. The two rests are thus identical; they are the inseparable parts of one perfect and blessed whole."—'Seeds of Thought,' by William Tait, M.A., Incumbent of St. Matthew's, Rugby: London, 1863.

† C, part iv. chap. xi. §§ 1, 2, 3, 4, pp. 566, 568, 569, 570.

which many other temptations are derived." The soul struggling too passionately and anxiously to rid itself of its maladies, resembles a bird taken in a net, which only entangles itself the more in striving to get loose, or a commonwealth in a state of civil discord, which lays itself open as an easy prey to the enemy. And hence he would have us "examine ourselves more than once every day whether our soul be indeed in our hands, or whether some passion or unquietness hath not robbed us of it."

Again, in his chapter* on "Meekness towards ourselves," which is one of the virtues treated of in the third part, he would never have us "vexed against ourselves or our own imperfections;" for, "as the reproofs of a father given sweetly and affectionately have far more power with the child to reclaim him than choler and anger, so, when our heart shall have done any fault, if we reprehend it with a quiet and sweet admonition, having more compassion of it than passion against it, and gently encouraging it to amendment, the repentance following thereupon will penetrate further, and strike deeper, than a vexing, angry, and storming repentance." Again, business is to be treated of with care, but without vexation and solicitude, after the model of "the holy angels,† who have care of our salvation, and procure it with diligence, yet are not solicitous or anxious, since that would be an interference with their blessedness. . . . Rivers, which glide peaceably through the valleys, bear great boats and rich merchandise; and the rain which falls gently in the open fields makes them fruitful in grass and corn; but torrents and rivers which run rapidly ruin the bordering country, and are unprofitable for traffic; as likewise the

* C, part iii. chap. ix. § 2, p. 303.

† C, part iii. chap. x. §§ 1 and 3, pp. 306-309.

vehement and tempestuous rains furrow the fields and meadows. Never was work well done with too much violence and earnestness. 'We must hasten leisurely,' says the proverb. 'He that hastens too much,' says Solomon, 'is in danger of stumbling and bruising his feet.' We do our business soon enough, when we do it well. Drones make more noise and are more earnest than bees, but they make only wax and not honey. So they that spend themselves with a tormenting anxiety and an eager solicitude, never do much nor well." And in accordance with the foregoing are the instructions which he gives for stilling our anger, "assembling* our forces not violently, but mildly, at the first touch we feel of it," and making "a meek resistance;" for, "as we see in courts of justice the ushers crying 'Silence!' make more noise than those whom they would silence, so it happens many times that by endeavouring with violence to suppress our choler, we stir up more trouble in our hearts than the choler would have done, and the heart thus troubled is no more master of itself."

Hence, too, from his conviction that everything approaching to unquietness of mind, all distraction, all over-eagerness and *empressement*, was a great hindrance to the spiritual life, sprang his exhortations to unity of effort, recommending "each one to select some particular spiritual exercise, or some special virtue, and to make it his particular pursuit."† "He used to say that all the saints have excelled in some particular grace, and that every religious order had some one as its ruling spirit, to be chiefly cultivated, although of course in no way excluding others."

And surely Francis, in representing peace of mind

* C, part iii. chap. viii. § 6, p. 297.

† E, part i. chap. ii. § 3, p. 17.

as so intimately bound up with our spiritual well-being and progress, has indeed lighted upon a great secret of holy living revealed to us in Holy Scripture, and applies it, and unfolds the properties of it, with much skill and appreciation of its efficacy. He hardly indeed develops in adequate proportions that rest of the soul which is purely *given* and in no sense *gained*,—the peace which flows, according to the foregoing context of that wonderful passage of St. Matthew's Gospel to which we have recently referred, from the revelation of the Father, which the Son makes to the soul by His teaching, His character, His work. He says too little of the "rest," which is of pure grace; though not more than enough of that, which comes of grace co-operating with human endeavour.

But this is not the only adverse criticism which we have to make upon the moral theology of an author, who commends more winningly than almost any other the pleasantness and peace which are to be found in wisdom's ways. Like many a physician of the body, Francis is so enamoured of his one specific that he closes his eyes to those other principles and truths which form a balance to it in the moral and spiritual system of the Gospel, and serve to keep it in its place. We are saved the pain and distastefulness of adverting in any great detail to this feature of Francis's theology, because it is not by any means so apparent in the treatise now under review as in some of his recorded sayings, and indeed it may be said to exist in the 'Introduction' only in germ. But there can be no doubt that Bishop Martensen is correct in reckoning Francis of Sales* as

* The Bishop implies this by naming three representatives of Quietism, of which Francis is chronologically the first. His words are: "The great religious phenomenon which is known under the name of *Quietism* may be described as that partial view of life which sets it forth as the highest aim for personality to be freed

virtually the originator of the doctrine called Quietism, —and as having sown the first seeds which, more than half a century after his death, bore antinomian fruit in the teaching of Molinos as to the indifference of human actions. Francis, not content with exhibiting, caricatured the truth that peace of mind is the secret of spiritual well-being and progress. For this truth is cruelly caricatured, when it is taught, or implied, that the will should have actually no tendency or pursuit of its own; that it should not merely echo, but be absorbed in, the Divine will;* and that consequently the only legitimate prayer is a prayer, not of impetration, but of acquiescence †—

from all motives, and only to be regulated by quietives. The soul here desires no longer to be set in motion, but exclusively to be brought to rest, to sink into peace, to cease to will. This system of thought appeared in a very peculiar form in the seventeenth century, in connexion with the tenet of disinterested love to God. . . . Its representatives are *Molinos* (1642–97), *Franciscus von Sales* (1567–1622), *Francisca von Chantal*, and *Jeanne de la Motte-Guyon* (1648–1717). Fénelon felt himself drawn in sympathy to this school of thought, became its apologist, and subjected himself to a degree of martyrdom for it, without however on his own account drawing conclusions from its doctrines.”—‘Christian Ethics.’ By H. Martensen, D.D., Bishop of Zealand. Translated by C. Spence. Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1873. P. 326, &c.

* “Francis said that directly a soul which has given itself up to God’s good pleasure becomes conscious of any individual will in itself, it makes haste to extinguish it in God’s Will, just as at sunrise you may see the light of the stars

melt away, so to speak, into the brightness of the glorious sunshine.”—E, part ii. chap. iv. § ii. p. 98.

† This resolution of all prayer into prayer of acquiescence finds a place in the theology of our day, where, however, it is no longer connected with Quietism, but is simply an erroneous inference from the apparent inviolability of natural laws. M. Émile Saisset expounds it in the ninth Meditation of his ‘Essay on Religious Philosophy’ (Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1863), whereon the translator (understood to be the present Bishop of Derry) pertinently remarks: “M. Saisset’s theory of prayer, in his ninth Meditation, is equally unsatisfactory to the philosopher and to the Christian. The philosopher will perceive that it solves the problem of prayer, by quietly eviscerating it of its difficulty. The Christian will have more serious objections. M. Saisset makes two kinds of prayer, a higher and a lower—the lower of impetration, the higher of resignation; and he appears to merge the lower absolutely in the higher. The lower is a pardonable weak-

that "Thy will be done" is not only the key-note of Prayer, but should drown every other note in Prayer's diapason. It is said to have been one of the spiritual maxims of Francis that "we should ask nothing and refuse nothing at God's hand." How such a maxim can be made to square with the precepts of Christ, "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you;" "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full," it is difficult to discern. God has indeed bidden us "be careful for nothing," but, so far from urging indifference as to the objects of human desire, He has expressly bidden us in everything to let our requests be made known to Him by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. But Francis having opened this vein of thought, his followers, as always happens with great teachers, worked it much further and more mischievously than he himself had done, until in the teaching of Molinos (and even in some sayings of Madame Guyon)* the development which it received shocked the *moral* sense of mankind almost as much as their *common* sense.† But having called attention to

ness—the higher is the heritage of maturity. . . . These views are too sublimated to be just. The Lord's Prayer at least contains the lower petition: 'Give us this day our daily bread,' as well as the higher, 'Thy will be done.' Without the former, the 'sublime familiarity of prayer,' as M. Saisset calls it in a phrase which is itself sublime, will cease to exist, and the very idea of Providence be lost."—Vol. ii. Essay by the Translator, pp. 218, 219.

* Bishop Martensen refers to her saying that she can no longer pray, "Forgive us our sins," because she loves God in a perfect self-forgetfulness. The Bishop

shows well the fundamentally false character of any such sentiment. And he proceeds thus: "In the acknowledgment by our Evangelical Church of justification by faith . . . we have the right point of junction, so as to avoid the mystic path of error. Accepting, appropriating, and grateful love to God in Christ, is *at once quietive and motive*. Or, if we express the matter from the objective side, God's mercy in Christ is at once the deepest ground of tranquillity and the deepest ground of action."—'Christian, Ethics,' p. 329.

† The doctrine of annihilating the human will by merging it in

this weak point of the moral theology taught by Francis, we are not called upon to do more. Indeed it almost seems as if the having said so much as this needed apology, for it is quite possible that the extraordinary fervour and spirituality to which Francis himself evidently attained, and the extraordinarily high level of communion with God, on which he walked in his everyday life, may give an appearance of overwrought sentimentality to some of his words, simply because the reader is on a level so far below him. To adapt to the subject a simile,* of his own, hens, which fly seldom and low, would have no right to criticise the gyrations of the eagle, as he wheels round and round in the golden light of the sun. Suffice it to say that, if there be anything either in the style or matter of his teaching defective (and of what uninspired teacher can we say

the Divine dates far earlier than Francis of Sales. It was the doctrine of Tauler and other mystics. In 'The Communication of Dr. *Thaulerus* with a poor Beggar,' subjoined to that translation of the 'Introduction' which we have followed in this paper, and which seems to have been drawn up by order of James II., it is brought out very strongly. The Doctor, having been directed by a voice from heaven to "a poor Beggar who had his feet filthy, foul, and all naked, whose clothes were not worth a half penny," as one who would instruct him in the spiritual life, and having heard from him that he was never unhappy, or unfortunate, and "never had any ill morrow," because he had always learned to resign himself to God's will, then put this searching question to him, "But what would you say if God should damn you?" "If God would damn me?" said the poor

man; "verily if he would use me so hardly, I have two arms to embrace; the one whereof is a profound humility, by the which I am united to his holy humanity; the other is love and charity, which joyns me to his Divinity, by which I would embrace him, in such sort that he should be constrain'd to descend with me into hell, and I had rather without comparison be in hell with God, than without him in Paradise." Of this, and similar words of Madame Guyon, it is enough to say that no such overwrought strains of devout sentiment are found in the words of Christ, or in the writings of the Prophets, Psalmists, and Apostles; and that philosophically any attempt to extirpate from our nature self-love, which is one of its most fundamental affections, must be an error, however piously designed.

* See C, part i. chap. i. § 5, pp. 4, 5.

that there is nothing ?), the test for detecting, and the norm for correcting it, is supplied abundantly by the pure and perfect Word of God. St. Theresa's often-repeated ejaculation was, "All that is not God is naught." And we may say, after reading the counsels for holy living given us by eminent saints and servants of God: "All that is not God's Word has a flaw and a failure somewhere." The author would have said so himself much more emphatically and feelingly than we can say it for him. Nevertheless this also is true, that such a spiritual work as we have reviewed confers upon every reader of it a high privilege, and a correspondingly high responsibility. The man must be either the victim of inveterate sectarian prejudice, or a stickler for the most vulgar theological commonplaces, or much worse than either, dead to all spiritual emotion, who can read Francis's treatise without a drawing of the heart towards its author, a longing after "The Devout Life" which he recommends, and a desire to act upon his instructions for leading it. Nor is there any reason whatever, save such as resides in the backwardness and sluggishness of our own wills, why we should not reach the high standard proposed in such works, even though in attempting it we should break down a thousand times. Nobody ever did reach it by any wisdom, strength, courage, resolution, or other resource of his own. It was never reached but by the blood and grace of Jesus Christ enabling, giving life, and hope, and spiritual vigour, and a perfect willingness to do, to be, and to suffer, all that God would have us. That blood and grace are as operative of spiritual conquests in the nineteenth century as they have at any time shown themselves to be in the heart and in the history of man; and to us they are offered as freely and unreservedly as to any of those inheritors of our fallen nature who have become the most signal monuments of their efficacy.

O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of Thy Son Christ our Lord ; Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*



BAXTER AND THE 'SAINT'S REST.'

Baxter's 'Saints' Rest' is a book of the same spontaneous birth as 'The Pilgrim's Progress' and 'The Imitation of Christ'—One of its faults is its diffuseness, and the process of abridgment it has undergone was necessary to adapt it for the many in whose hearts it has made itself a home—Baxter sometimes abuses his mastery in the art of distributing his materials—One formal merit the book possesses is its style; it exhibits pathos, earnestness, a robust and masculine eloquence, all no doubt elements of its abiding popularity.

The book was originally written for the author's own use—It is the utterance of one whose own life was one long familiarity with pain and suffering, and who yearned for rest—Baxter felt profoundly the religious divisions of England; he was essentially a man of peace; but his manner of writing brought him into conflict with everybody, and he signally failed in his attempts to reconcile and to pacify.

The motive and final cause of the book was the author's desire to become acquainted with and conversant in heaven—This is an explanation of the importance he attached to meditation, which he urges in it as a duty of God's own ordaining.

The good which a nearer acquaintance with the work may work is this: It brings the careless into contact with one who will plead with them as perhaps none ever pleaded with them before—This is most characteristic of the man and the book—For those who have already begun well, the book is a help to the setting forward of a higher life—It contains counsels of great excellence, and protests against mischievous exaggerations into which they might be in danger of falling—It initiates those who have yielded themselves to his guidance into the deeper mysteries of divine meditation, furnishing them with some of the materials on which the soul may work, and leading them to the contemplation of the glory of God.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."—

HEBREWS iv. 9.

I HAVE undertaken to speak to you this day of one, and of the most famous work of one, who at the time

of his death stood outside of, and to a certain point in antagonism to, that Church, whereof most, if not all, of us here present have the privilege of being members. I am about to express my own sympathy, and to claim yours, for labours of his, as wrought for the common good, the spiritual profit of us all. For myself I need hardly say that there does not seem to me any inconsistency in this. I feel no embarrassment in regard of the position which I occupy; nor am I conscious that any explanation, still less that any apology, is needful from me. When brought into contact with those who stand outside of our own communion, be they the living or the dead, I make no pretence of believing that there are not differences, it may be important differences, between us; I do not hesitate to profess that I regard my own as the best; else how should I justify my cleaving to it? And further, I am persuaded that we do not hasten, but rather put further off, that blessed day when all who are Christ's shall be outwardly as well as inwardly one in Him, by premature anticipations and snatchings at the same. To heal our divisions, so to heal them, I mean, that they shall not presently break out anew and prove more inveterate than ever, is almost a Pentecostal work. Whenever things are ripe for such a consummation, it will come as of itself; there will be no mistake about it; the dividing walls and separating barriers will fall away as of their own accord. Meanwhile, and having ever in view the hastening of the coming of such a day, there is a duty which is plainly ours, a duty at once negative and positive; a negative duty, that we do not accentuate, emphasize, exaggerate points of difference; a positive duty, that we heartily thank God for all which He has wrought *in* any of His Saints and servants, for the likeness to Christ which He has formed in them; and not less for all which He has accomplished *by* them;

that we recognise this with no grudging recognition as a contribution thrown into the common stock of the Church, an addition to the wealth not of a section of it, but of the whole. It is this last duty, which it is my privilege and pleasure to be called to fulfil to-day. With Richard Baxter's Nonconformity, whether it was his fault, or the Church's fault, or nobody's fault, or everybody's fault, with this I have happily nothing this day to do. With these preliminary words I pass to my proper theme.

There are books which seem rather to write themselves, than to be written; which are as the medicinal gum that oozes from the tree, without constraint and almost without solicitation; books, of which the authors, if it were demanded of them why they wrote them, might with perfect truth reply, because they could not help it. Such I take very much 'The Pilgrim's Progress' to have been; and such 'The Imitation of Christ;' the literary purpose, the intention of composing a book, having altogether fallen into the background. Many passages make plain that Baxter's 'Saint's Rest' is a book of the same spontaneous birth; and I much regret that in the shorter form, which is the only one for the most part in which we possess or read it, these passages have mainly or altogether been allowed to disappear. For indeed, as is needful for many reasons here to observe, the veritable work, as it came from Baxter's hands, has important points of unlikeness as compared with the little volume, which we give as a prize in our Sunday schools, and in other ways seek to disperse; and which in the case of many among us is probably all with which we ourselves are familiar. In mere bulk, the book as he wrote and published it is four or five times bigger than the little volume which we know; so that when this announces itself as "abridged," this

announcement fails to convey, or conveys very inadequately, the fact of the extent to which it has been cut short; nay, I am obliged to add, cut short not always with understanding. Thus, to go no further than the title-page, we miss there the affecting and very instructive words as to the true meaning and primary purpose with which it was written, "Written by the Author for his own use, in the time of his languishing, when God took him off from all public employment." And we miss not less many allusions to the troublous times in which he lived and wrote, to Worcester, and Edgehill, and Naseby, to the pall of mourning which our Civil War had spread over the face of England; all of which had their use, served to give an historic basis to the book, and hindered it from floating as it were in the air. I would not here be misunderstood. The process of abridgment has been somewhat mercilessly, and at times somewhat clumsily executed; and yet under no other conditions could the book have made itself the home which it has made in the hearts of so many thousands in our land. Half is sometimes more than the whole; and this may be true of the fourth part as well. The book, as Baxter wrote it, is long; sometimes, if we were to venture to speak out all that is in our hearts, we should acknowledge it is tedious; above all in the earlier parts. It is only after a while that he extricates himself from straits and narrows, in which he has needlessly entangled himself there.

But now having ventured on this word of fault-finding, let me finish with the same; and note certain defects and drawbacks, mostly formal, which, if I am not mistaken, cleave to it; that so, this done, I may dismiss the subject, and proceed to trace, as I best may, what of excellent worth it offers to us. Baxter then, a master

in the art of the distribution of his materials, with many of the merits of the Schoolmen whom he studied so closely, and with some of their faults, sometimes abuses this mastery; pushes distinctions and divisions so far, multiplies them so wantonly, that not clearness, but confusion, is the result. His method is not his servant, but he the servant of his method. And as with the distribution of his materials, so also with his materials themselves. They accumulate beyond all reason under his hands. He is so full, with so vast a range of theological interests, so well versed in the controversies of his own time and of the times past, that it is only too easy for him to go off upon some side quest, if such offers itself to him, and to follow it up much further than is consistent with the main purpose or general symmetry of the work which he has actually in hand. Take a notable example of this from the book immediately before us. He has not advanced very far in his praise of the heavenly rest before it comes strongly home to him that the certainty of our inheriting this rest depends on the credibility of the Scriptures which promise it, on the fact that they are no other than the infallible word of God; and hereupon he addresses himself to the whole question of the divine authority of Scripture, and generally of the Evidences of the Christian Religion, devoting more than one hundred and thirty closely printed pages to the subject. I need hardly say that with occasional good points this treatise on Christian Evidences, for it is nothing less, is of comparatively little value now; although this by no fault of the writer. The battle which is of all the ages, that, I mean, of faith with unbelief, has within the last two hundred years, above all during the last twenty, so shifted its ground, that "the high places of the field," those, which being won or lost, do in fact determine the issues of the conflict, have ceased to be the same which

in his time they were ; nay the very foes are different, and different too is that for which *we* are contending. The Deist of the seventeenth century denied the *fact* of our having received a revelation from God ; he never, so far as I know, denied the *possibility* of our receiving such a revelation. Then, and up to a recent date, we had not staked all upon the issue. Even if the battle had gone against us, something would have still remained ; or at least we might have believed that something remained ; a living personal extramundane God, governing the world in righteousness ; a voice of conscience, His voice within us, attesting the everlasting distinctions between good and evil ; the hope of immortality. These, with other things precious, men might still have counted their own. Now there is no room for any such belief ; the conflict is for all which we have ; for all which is human and all which is divine in man ; and it is well that we should look this fact in the face.

And other avenues stretching away to the right hand and to the left, Baxter cannot always resist the temptation to explore ; and this, though they may lead him far away from that which is his more immediate concern. Above all, let him only find himself in the neighbourhood of some perplexed question of the Schools, such a one as has tasked and divided the subtlest intellects of Christendom for centuries, which has set Thomist against Scotist, Realist against Nominalist, and is likely to do the same to the end of time :—for these controversies are not dead, they have only a little shifted their ground ;—and at once, like the war-horse of Job, he smells the battle afar off, “the thunder of the captains and the shouting,” and nothing will content him till he finds himself in their midst.

I have thus delivered myself freely in regard of

certain drawbacks and faults from which this book cannot be affirmed to be free; and dealing, as I am thus far, mainly with things formal and external, let me mention here, before entering into deeper matters, one formal merit which it eminently possesses. I refer to that without which, I suppose, no book ever won a permanent place in the literature of a nation, and which I have no scruple in ascribing to it—I mean its style. A great admirer of Baxter has recently suggested a doubt whether he ever recast a sentence, or bestowed a thought on its rhythm, and the balance of its several parts; statements of his own make it tolerably certain that he did not. As a consequence he has none of those bravura passages which must have cost Jeremy Taylor, in his ‘Holy Living and Dying’ and elsewhere, so much of thought and pains, for such do not come of themselves, and unbidden, to the most accomplished masters of language. But for all this there reigns in Baxter’s writings, and not least in ‘The Saint’s Rest,’ a robust and masculine eloquence; nor do these want from time to time rare and unsought felicities of language, which, once heard, can scarcely be forgotten. In regard indeed of the choice of words the book might have been written yesterday. There is hardly one which has become obsolete; hardly one which has drifted away from the meaning which it has in his writings. This may not be a great matter; but it argues a rare insight, conscious or unconscious, into all which was truest, into all which was furthest removed from affectation and untruthfulness in the language that after more than two hundred years so it should be; and we may recognize here an element, not to be overlooked, of the abiding popularity of the book.

Having tarried thus long as in the outer court of the temple, let me now draw nearer to the heart of things.

And first I will attempt to realize to myself and to you the conditions, outward and inward, under which this book was produced, the forces which contributed to its production; for these will have gone far to make it what it is. I remarked at the outset that the book was one of those which seem rather to write themselves than to be written. Let this, however, be as it may, so much at least stands fast, that it was originally composed for his own use—surely an invaluable condition for a book of practical divinity, that it should have been written to instruct, to comfort, to strengthen him from whom it came, and then, if it might be, others. We have his own account of the genesis of the book, the pearl and crown, as I take it, of all his books. Removed by sickness from all active exercise of his ministry, left solitary in a country-house, sentenced to death by the physicians, "I began," he says, "to contemplate more seriously the everlasting rest which I apprehended myself to be just on the borders of. That my thoughts might not too much scatter in my meditation, I began to write something on the subject; but being continued long in weakness, where I had no books and no better employment, I followed on till it was enlarged to the bulk in which it is published."

This then we note first about the book, and as helping to explain and account for its existence, namely, that it was the writing of one whose own life was a long familiarity with pain; not seldom a strong agony; who could take up with most literal truth the words of the great apostle, "In this tabernacle we groan." No one would willingly read the catalogue which more than once he has given of all the diseases which laid siege in his body to the citadel of life: but certainly no one can read it without marvel that one with twenty mortal sicknesses on his head should have seen that

suffering life prolonged for threescore and sixteen years. As little can any one read it without admiration for that continual triumph of the spirit over the flesh and over the fleshly ills, which could alone have enabled him to crowd into years so preoccupied with pain such a vast amount of work for God. He makes no parade of these sufferings; in this book only slightly alludes to them; but the yearning of the sick after health, of the weary after rest, the sense of unease, of a vast weariness enfolding all things here, makes itself very distinctly felt in such passages as the following :—

“Surely, a man would think, who looks upon the face of the world, that rest should to all men seem seasonable. Some of us are languishing under continual weakness, and groaning under most grievous pains, crying in the morning, would God it were evening, and in the evening would God it were morning, weary of going, weary of sitting, weary of standing, weary of lying, weary of eating, of speaking, of walking, weary of our very friends, weary of ourselves; oh how oft hath this been mine own case, and is not rest yet seasonable? Whither can you go; or into what company can you come, where the voice of complaining doth not show that men live in a continual weariness? But especially the saints, who are most weary of that which the world cannot feel. What godly society almost can you fall into, but you shall hear by their moans that somewhat aileth them? Some weary of a blind mind, doubting concerning the way they walk in, unsettled in almost all their thoughts; some weary of a hard heart, some of a proud, some of a passionate, and some of all these and much more. Some weary of their daily doubtings and fears concerning their spiritual estate, and some of the want of spiritual joys, and some of the sense of God’s wrath, and is not rest then seasonable?”

But, again, Baxter felt profoundly the religious divisions, if not of Christendom, yet certainly of England ; and moreover, as he himself often confesses, there was a deep disappointment which mingled with his sense of these. That the openly profane should make war with all who would live godly, for this he was prepared ; nothing else was to be expected. But it went to his heart, and he recurs to this with a sad iteration, that those professing godliness should scorn and defame, should bite and devour one another as they did. Some of us may have heard tell of a dying saint, who being reminded by his friends that he was passing into a world where the wicked cease from troubling, took up and completed the patriarch's words, adding, "Yes, and where the good cease from troubling too." Few have felt this troubling on the part of the good, or of those whom he esteemed good, more acutely than Baxter did. I am confident that I do not err in esteeming it one of the main burdens which made him yearn for that heavenly rest, where the wicked cannot, and where the good have no desire, to trouble any more.

Some will be surprised when I thus implicitly claim Baxter as a son of peace ; some will be tempted to disallow this claim ; remembering, as no doubt they will, that he certainly took no inconsiderable share in the theological fighting of his time. And no doubt, at a first glance, and as long as we dwell on the mere surface of things, it is not unnatural to regard him as a man of war, of strife and contention all his life long ; fighting against everybody ; fighting, as I need not tell you, against Papists, though counted by many Protestants as only half-hearted in this battle, and this because he would not teach that the further from Rome the nearer to God ; fighting against the Prelatists or Bishops ; and then, when these had disappeared for a while from the

scene, misliking many things in the Presbyterian rule which had succeeded; at open war with the Independents, with the Fifth Monarchy Men, with the Anabaptists; with the Libertines or Antinomians; with the Quakers, not the sober quietists then that they are now; with the Seekers, who counted that the kingdom of God was still to seek; and with various minor sects, "some tolerable, some intolerable," so he describes them, which distracted the land; his hand against all these; and yet I am bound to say, with all this, never in my judgment fighting for mere fighting's sake; but always fighting for peace. When he said, and they are words well worth remembering, "He that is not a son of peace is not a son of God," this was not merely a pointed epigrammatic saying which he was uttering, but a voice which came from the deep of his heart. And it is no more than due to him to add that as he yearned, so he laboured, for peace. There is something affecting, almost pathetic, in his entire confidence, a confidence which no experience seemed able to shake, that all men, if once shown they were in the wrong, would at once own that they were so, and without more ado would confess and forsake the errors of which they were convinced. In this conviction he was never weary of writing books with titles such as these: 'A Friendly Accommodation,' or again, 'Pacifying Principles,' or once more, 'Against Contentions and Church-distracting Controversies,' or yet once again, 'An End of Doctrinal Controversies by reconciling Explication.'

Whether his schemes of at-one-ment were in deed always reconciling and pacifying, may be fairly a question; but in this indomitable faith of his that peace was attainable, and that for the attaining of this it only needed that men should be clearly made to see on which side the right lay, and that it was possible to make them see this, I recognize a certain simplicity if you

will; but the grand simplicity of a man who ascribed to others the same intellectual and moral honesty, the same allegiance to the truth or to what they believed to be the truth, which he found in himself.

I have said that it might very fairly be a question whether his schemes of pacification were such as were always likely either in manner or matter to be crowned with very signal success. And indeed, when we come to acquaint ourselves a little closer with them, it is not very wonderful if they failed. Here is one of his summonses to the "word-warriors"—this excellent phrase is of his own coining—to lay down their arms and to come to some understanding. It constitutes the title-page of his 'Catholic Theology,' and little as he may have intended this, it must be owned that every word of it is a provocation and a challenge. It is worth quoting, and with very slight omissions I quote it:

"Catholic Theology, plain, pure, peaceable; for pacifying of the dogmatical word-warriors, who by contending about things unrevealed, or not understood, and by putting verbal differences for real, and their arbitrary notions for necessary sacred truths, deceived and deceiving, have long been the shame of the Christian religion, a scandal and hardening to unbelievers, the incendiaries, dividers and distracters of the Church, the subverters of their own souls, and those of their followers, calling them to a blind zeal and wrathful warfare against true piety, love and peace, and teaching them to censure, backbite, slander and prate against each other for things which they never understood."

Certainly it is not strange if these words exercised no eminently pacifying influence on those to whom

they were addressed ; if he who wrote them had often to take up the words of the Psalmist : " I labour for peace, but when I speak to them thereof, they make them ready to battle." As I have said already, this dwelling in the tents of Kedar, this labouring for peace, but, whether by his own fault or the faults of others, labouring in vain, was another burden of his spirit, and one I am persuaded which mightily helped his longing for the true City of the Vision of Peace.

But if life had its disappointments, it had its dangers too ; was full of these, of temptations innumerable. How should he not yearn to leave them for ever behind. Hear some words of his, and you will own that he took these temptations in earnest, that for him the conflict with them was not a mere beating of the air, or fighting with shadows :

" O the hourly dangers that we poor sinners walk in ! Every sense is a snare, every member a snare, every mercy a snare, and every duty a snare to us. We can scarce open our eyes but we are in danger. If we behold them above us, we are in danger of envy. If we see sumptuous buildings, pleasant habitations, honour and riches, we are in danger to be drawn away with covetous desires ; if the rags and beggary of others, we are in danger of self-applauding thoughts and unmercifulness. If we see beauty, it is a bait to lust ; if deformity, to loathing and disdain. We can scarcely hear a word spoken, but contains to us matter of temptation. Have we comeliness and beauty, what fuel for pride ! are we deformed, what an occasion of repining ! Have we strength of reason and gifts of learning, oh how hard it is not to be puffed up, to seek ourselves, to hunt after applause, to mislike the simplicity of Christ. Are we unlearned, and of shallow

heads and slender parts, how apt then to despise what we have not, and if conceitedness and pride do but strike in, to become a leading troubler of the Church's peace under pretence of truth and holiness. Are we men of eminence, how hard to devote our power to His glory from whom we have received it. Are we inferior and subjects, how prone to grudge at others' pre-eminence, to bring all their actions to the bar of our incompetent judgment. Are we rich and not too much exalted; are we poor and not discontented. If we be sick, oh how impatient; if in health, how few and stupid our thoughts of eternity!"

But the author of 'The Saint's Rest' aims at something more than the disenchanting us from the love of this world, and from the minding of earthly things. This is but half, and the easiest half, of the task which he has set before him. "To despise earth," he has somewhere said, "is easy to me, but not so easy to be acquainted and conversant in heaven." This, as its name sufficiently declares, is the motive and final cause of the book—to assist and set forward, in himself first and then in others, this acquaintance with heaven, this conversation in heaven; to kindle, by meditation on heavenly things, above all of the heavenly rest, the cold affection towards these which he mourned in himself, which he saw too plainly in others; which who is there among us that does not feel in himself?

And here is indeed an explanation of the immense importance which he attached to meditation, of the prominence which he gave to it as a help, nay, almost as an exercise absolutely necessary for the strengthening and deepening of the spiritual life of the soul, with the most careful directions when and where and how this may be most profitably exercised, which he gives.

Many, if I mistake not, are wont to regard this exercise of meditation with coldness and distrust, as a device for the promotion of a certain artificial piety and a transient excitement of the religious affections; much extolled and much practised in the Roman Catholic Church; and recently, with other questionable helps to devotion, borrowed from it by a few among ourselves. There cannot, however, be a greater mistake than this. It needs but a very slight acquaintance with the best Puritan divinity of the seventeenth century, with such books as Gurnall's 'Christian Armour,' with Bates' treatise on this very matter, above all with the writings of Baxter, and this one first of all, to dissipate any such notion.

The fourth and concluding portion of 'The Saint's Rest,' nearly three hundred pages, and constituting almost an independent work—for it has its own title-page, its own preface, its own dedication—is devoted exclusively to the urging of this duty, which he describes as "the delightfullest task to the spirit, and the most tedious to the flesh, that ever men on earth were employed in." I must needs consider it the most precious portion of the whole book, indeed he himself announces that all which went before was but as a leading up to this. But he shall himself describe this section of his work: "a Directory," he calls it, "for the getting and keeping of the heart in heaven by the diligent practice of that excellent unknown duty of Heavenly Meditation; being the main thing intended by the author in the writing of this book, and to which all the rest is but subservient." And on meditation, not merely as a help to the heavenly life, but as one which none may lawfully forego, he often expresses himself very strongly, as thus:—"That meditation is a duty of God's ordering I never met with a man that would deny. It is in word confessed to be a duty by all, but by the constant neglect denied by most."

I have thus sought to trace very briefly the moral and spiritual factors, as they present themselves to me, which wrought together for the producing of this book ; the leading objects and aims which the writer of it set before him. But what, some may say, to whom it is still an unknown land, or who to-day for the first time are skirting with me its outermost borders, what of special spiritual good may we hope to obtain by nearer acquaintance with it ? First, then, let me say, If there should be any in this great assembly who, notwithstanding their presence among us here to-day, do yet in their heart of hearts think scorn of that pleasant land, are despisers of that heavenly rest to which he invites them, they, if they can be persuaded to a closer familiarity with it, will come into contact with one whom in other points they may judge of as they may ; but this I dare affirm they will not be able to deny, that to him heaven was no sentimental dream, and hell no painted flame ; with one who will plead with them as probably they never have been pleaded with before, lest a promise being left them of entering into that rest, they should fall short of it. For indeed I have sometimes thought that this *pathos*, this passionate earnestness, is the quality in Baxter wherein he is almost, if not altogether, without a peer. There have been others in other points his equals and his superiors. But I ask myself where I should find any other such pleading with souls, any other, " Why will ye die ? " which does not fall short of his.

I could not leave this unsaid, without leaving unsaid that which is most characteristic of the man and of the book. But I do not dwell on it any further. It is of the book as a help to the setting forward of the higher life in them who have already begun well, that it is my task to speak. If you ask me what help to this you

may expect to find in it, I will say in the first place, counsels of excellent good sense, as serviceable to-day as on the day upon which they were first uttered; protests against mischievous exaggerations, whether on the right hand or on the left, you will meet with in abundance. Thus what can be better than this against those who taught (there are some who teach so nowadays), that men not merely may know, but *must* know the exact moment of their conversion, or have not been converted at all:

“I will not enquire whether thou remember the time or the order of these workings of the Spirit. There may be much uncertainty and mistake in that. But I desire thee to look into thy soul, and to see whether thou find such works [of the Spirit] wrought within thee. And then, if thou be sure they are there, the matter is not so great though thou know not when or how thou camest by them.”

Or here again on what I will venture to call the very small religious value of tears:

“Some soft and passionate natures may have tears at command, when one that is truly gracious hath none; yet is this Christian with dry eyes more solidly apprehensive and deeply affected than the other is in the midst of his tears; and the weeping hypocrite will be drawn to his sin again with a trifle, which the groaning Christian would not be lured to commit with crowns and kingdoms.”

Or once more, on the infinite and dangerous self-confidence so often to be seen in those who after long walking in darkness have suddenly caught a partial glimpse of the true light:

“The first new strange apparition of light doth so amaze them, they think they are in the third heavens, when they are but newly passed from the suburbs of hell; and are presently as confident as if they knew all things, when they have not half light enough to acquaint them with their own ignorance.”

Certainly these are good; and it would be easy to multiply them a hundredfold; but there is more and better and higher behind. That pathos which I ascribed to Baxter just now does not manifest itself merely in those calls to the unconverted, full as those are of an inward bleeding compassion. There are passages not a few toward the end of the book, strains of the most passionate devotion, in which he seeks to initiate such as have yielded themselves to his guidance into the deeper mysteries of divine meditation, to furnish them with some of the materials on which the soul may work, to lead them upward and onward, step by step, from strength to strength, from glory to glory, to the contemplation of the glory of God. Take, for example, this. He has spoken of some motives to love, and proceeds:

“But if yet thou feelest not thy love to work, lead thy heart further, and shew it yet more. Shew it the King of saints on the throne of his glory, who is the first and the last; who liveth and was dead. Draw near and behold Him. Dost thou not hear his voice? He that called Thomas to come near and to see the print of the nails, and to put his fingers into his wounds, He it is that calls to thee, Come near, and be not faithless but believing. Look well upon Him. Dost thou not know Him? Why, it is He that brought thee up from the pit of hell and purchased the advancement which thou must inherit for ever. And yet dost thou not know Him? Why, his hands were pierced, his head

was pierced, his side was pierced, his heart was pierced with the sting of thy sins, that by these marks thou mightest always know Him. Hast thou forgotten since He wounded Himself to cure thy wounds; and let out his own blood to stop thy bleeding. If thou know Him not by the face, the voice, the hands, if thou know Him not by the tears and bloody sweat, yet look nearer thou mayest know Him by the heart.

“Hast thou forgotten the time when thou wast weeping, and He wiped the tears from thine eyes? when thou wast bleeding, and He wiped the blood from thy soul? when pricking cares and fears did grieve thee, and He did refresh thee and draw out the thorns? Hast thou forgotten when thy folly did wound thy soul, and the venomous guilt did seize upon thy heart; when He sucked forth the mortal poison from thy soul, though therewith he drew it into his own? Oh how often hath He found thee sitting weeping like Hagar, while thou gavest up thy state, thy friends, thy life, yea, thy soul for lost; and He opened to thee a well of consolation, and opened thine eyes also, that thou mightest see it. How oft hath He found thee in the posture of Elias, sitting down under the tree forlorn and solitary, and desiring rather to die than to live; and He hath spread thee a table of relief from heaven, and sent thee away refreshed, and encouraged to his work. How oft hath He found thee in such a passion as Jonas, in thy peevish frenzy aweary of thy life; and He hath not answered passion with passion, though He might indeed have done well to be angry, but hath mildly reasoned thee out of thy madness, and said, Dost thou well to be angry, and to repine against Me? How often hath He set thee on watching and praying and repenting and believing, and when He hath returned, hath found thee fast asleep, and yet He hath not taken thee at the worst, but instead of an angry

aggravation of thy fault, He hath covered it over with the mantle of love, and prevented thy overmuch sorrow with a gentle excuse, The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. How oft hath He been traduced in his cause or name, and thou hast (like Peter) denied Him at least by thy silence, while He hath stood in sight; yet all the revenge He hath taken hath been a heartmelting look, and a silent remembering thee of thy fault by his countenance."

And hear him once and only once more; as he rebukes with the same passionate earnestness those who, loving God, do not love Him better; who professing to seek, and in a sense seeking, a heavenly country, are yet unwilling to reach it, and to find themselves (all life's tempests past) in the Fair Havens of the eternal rest:

"Ah foolish, wretched soul, doth every prisoner groan for freedom? and every slave desire his jubilee? and every sick man long for health? and every hungry man for food, and dost thou alone abhor deliverance? Doth the seaman long to see the land? Doth the husbandman desire the harvest? and the traveller long to be at home? and the soldier long to win the field? And art thou loth to see thy labours finished? and to receive the end of thy faith? and to obtain the things for which thou livest? Are all thy sufferings only seeming? have thy griefs and groans been only dreams? If they were, yet methinks we should not be afraid of waking; fearful dreams are not delightful. Or is it not rather the world's delights that are all mere dreams and shadows? Is not all its glory as the light of a glow-worm, a wandering fire; yielding but small directing light and as little comforting heat in all our doubtful and sorrowful darkness. Or hath the world in these its latter days laid aside its ancient enmity? Is it become of late more kind? Who hath

wrought this great change, and who hath made this reconciliation? Surely not the great Reconciler. He hath told us in the world we shall have trouble, and in Him only we shall have peace. We may reconcile ourselves to the world (at our peril), but it will never reconcile itself to us. Oh foolish unworthy soul, who hadst rather dwell in this land of darkness than be at rest with Christ; who hadst rather stay among the wolves, and daily suffer the scorpion's stings, than to praise the Lord with the Host of heaven! If thou didst well know what heaven is, and what earth is, it would not be so."

And the same yearning which uttered itself in this book, the firstfruits of his pen, written before half his earthly pilgrimage was finished, abode with him in strength to the last. Richard Baxter is not generally known as a poet; but a small volume of 'Poetical Fragments,' so he calls them, is one of the hundred and forty books, great and small, which acknowledge him for their author. One of these poems he calls his "Valediction," that also written at a time when he esteemed himself on the very borders of the heavenly country, though in fact some ten years more should elapse before that country was reached.

Let me cite as *my* valediction a few verses from this, as showing that age had not dulled his longing desire for the Heavenly rest; being such also as may fitly quicken our own desire after the same:—

"What is the time that's gone,
And what is that to come?
Is it not now as none?
The present stays not.
Time posteth, oh how fast,
Unwelcome death makes haste,
None can call back the past,
Judgement delays not.

Though God brings in the light,
Sinners awake not;
Because hell's out of sight,
They sin forsake not.

"Man walks in a vain shew;
They know, yet will not know,
Sit still, when they should go,
But run for shadows;
While they might taste and know
The living streams that flow,
And crop the flowers that grow,
In Christ's sweet meadows.
Life's better slept away
Than as they use it;
In sin and drunken play
Vain men abuse it.

"Is this the world men choose,
For which they heaven refuse,
And Christ and grace abuse,
And not receive it?
Shall I not guilty be
Of this in some degree,
If hence God would me free,
And I'd not leave it?
My soul, from Sodom fly,
Lest wrath there find thee;
Thy refuge rest is nigh,
Look not behind thee.

"There's none of this ado;
None of the hellish crew,
God's promise is most true,
Boldly believe it.
My friends are gone before,
And I am near the shore,
My soul stands at the door;
O Lord, receive it.
It trusts Christ and his merits;
The dead He raises.
Join it with blessed Spirits,
Who sing thy praises."

ST. AUGUSTINE'S 'CONFESSIONS.'

"When he came to himself"—a suitable motto. I. Attractions of the 'Confessions' for different classes of readers. II. Meaning of the Title—It includes *adoration* as well as *penitence*; the book is free from prurient disclosures; contrast between St. Augustine and Rousseau. III. i. Brief sketch of St. Augustine's life: ii. Three of its leading scenes: 1. Carthage; Roman-African life in the fourth century; the Latin Theatre at Carthage; St. Augustine on the moral tendency of the Drama: 2. Milan; St. Augustine's history of his Conversion; Augustine, Monica, and Ambrose; baptism of Augustine: 3. Ostia; Death of Monica. IV. Special value of the 'Confessions'; a book for educated young men for *three* reasons:—(a) Extraordinary felicity of occasional sentences: (b) Power of mental analysis; instance of psychological observation brought to bear upon examination of conscience: (c) general views of classical antiquity; Augustine's favourable judgment of the higher heathen philosophy; his scruples as to its literature; his opinion of Terence; his severity to Virgil; popularity of Virgil accounted for; Augustine's reading at Cassiciacum; his memory and imagination always haunted by Virgil. V. More personal lessons: the 'Confessions' not written by one who held the principles of modern Romanism; pervading characteristics: 1. Devout submission to Holy Scripture. 2. True view of Penitence. 3. The sufficiency of Christ.

[It may be well to mention that, with Mr. Strahan's kind permission, free use has been made of an article contributed by the writer several years ago to the *Contemporary Review*. The passages cited from the 'Confessions' are sometimes translated by the preacher, and sometimes borrowed from the Oxford Translation.]

"When he came to himself."—ST. LUKE xv. 17.

ALMOST every commentator has pointed out in this expression an allusion to those who, after a period of mental alienation, return to a sound mind. Perhaps the most

literal is the deepest and truest rendering—"Having entered into himself." He who knows what is in man describes that solemn moment in the life of a soul, when the heart first really recollects itself. "Remembrance," says a Jew, "is the twin-brother of Repentance."

The heart—the inner being—is the sanctuary of God; to enter into ourselves is to meet God. In this sense, I can scarcely find a more fitting motto for the 'Confessions' of St. Augustine.

I.

There are few books which have presented attractions to so many different classes of readers as the 'Confessions.' In this, more than in any other among his voluminous productions, is reflected "that mixture of passion and gentleness, of authority and sympathy, of largeness of mind and logical rigour,"* which has given Augustine such rare influence in the Christian Church. The man of letters finds in it the first specimen of those revelations of an inner life which have an especial charm for the modern spirit. He recognises in it a style, unquestionably clouded by the false and affected rhetoric of a declining civilisation, yet rising at times into flights which human oratory has seldom outsoared: whose contorted antitheses are more than atoned for by touches of irresistible tenderness, and by those occasional utterances which become lodged in the memory of the human race—those one or two words engraven by the hand of genius upon the rock, which are better than a thousand written upon the sand. The psychologist who turns over the pages feels, perhaps, at first, some impatient contempt of the sighs and prayers which interrupt a scientific discussion. But he is sur-

* M. Guizot, in his admirable *rationale* of the Pelagian Controversy, 'Histoire de la Civilisation,' i. 180-189.

prised by some subtle piece of mental analysis, by speculations on Creation, Time, Eternity, Memory, which seem to anticipate not only Reid and Jouffroy, but even Kant and Descartes. The preacher who understands his art may find in the 'Confessions,' not, indeed, ready-made weapons for the nineteenth century, but materials which may be forged into weapons that will reach the soul of every man in every age. The greatest sacred orators have seldom appeared more original than when they were borrowing judiciously from the 'Confessions.* The theologian of our own Church will discover in the book occasionally expressions—and occasionally something more than expressions—some of the unguarded rhetoric which was frozen into logic by succeeding generations, some of the tares that already began to grow rankly in the field of the Church—which may be more or less triumphantly quoted by the Roman Catholic controversialist.† Yet he will discover also abundant indications of a theological system to which, as a whole, he may apply that which Gibbon has shrewdly observed of one portion of it—namely, that "it has been received with public applause and secret reluctance by the Latin Church."‡ Still more may he trace the consistent lines of a method of which it is no exaggeration to say that with lofty reverence for human reason and its deferential appeals to Holy Scripture, it is anti-Roman in its very substance.§ Nor among the

* I may instance the use made by Massillon in his sermon, "Délai de la Conversion," of the passage:—"Retinebant nugæ nugarum et subcutiebant vestem meam carneam, et submurmurabant: dimittisne nos? et a momento isto non erimus tecum ultra in æternum? et a momento isto non tibi licebit hoc et illud ultra in æternum?"—"Confess.' viii. 11.

† E.g. the invention of the bodies of Protasius and Gervasius, x. 7, and the request for prayer for Patricius and Monica, ix. 13.

‡ Chapter xxxiii.

§ Cardinal Perrone may have had the system and method of Augustine in view, rather than particular "texts," when he said, "Otez à ceux de la religion cet Auteur, ils sont défaits, et n'ont

readers of this delightful volume are we to forget those whose approbation its author most valued, the men who give it a place among the books which they read before or after they have knelt in their Saviour's presence, who feel in it, across the gulf of years, the very heart-pulse of its saintly author's religious affections, who bless him for wise warnings and undying hopes. We may, I think go even further than this. It is true of Augustine's 'Confessions' more than of most uninspired books, *ea est quæ crescit cum parvulis*; it grows with our growth. Each age of human life finds in it a peculiar line of attraction. In youth it charms us by its delineation of passion, by those living sentences which vibrate as we touch them. But its psychology seems hopelessly obscure, its metaphysics hopelessly mystic, the whole mass of the composition destitute of those notches and marks for analytic measurement which are exacted by a student trained in our modern schools. Yet after we have not only studied other men's thoughts, but thought ourselves; after we have felt, and suffered, and doubted, there are rays which open up an avenue of light into the very heart of that which once appeared to us but a silver mist, and the intellect perceives substance where it suspected nothing but confusion. We may even say that these 'Confessions' have been almost equally appreciated by dogmatism and free thought, by Christians and sceptics—by the latter, for the marks which they bear of having come from an age of doubt and distraction; by the former, for the passionate self-surrender from the days of the voice in the garden and

plus rien."—'Perroniana,' p. 100. An amusing passage follows, from which it appears that it was the habit of French preachers to speak of Monseigneur Saint Paul, as in the first chapter, "De la Prognostication Pantagrueline." The

other saints of the Roman calendar they treated only to Monsieur and Madame. "Monsieur d'O. said that those who in preaching talked of Monsieur Saint Augustine only proved that they were not familiar with that saint."

the baptism at Milan. Those who dislike the journey love Augustine for his inimitable appreciation of the rest to which it brought him. Those who look upon the rest as a delusion are ready to proclaim that the journey was never traversed with a freer step, or described by a more opulent pencil.

II.

It is important for our present purpose to see with some exactness what we are to understand by the title of the book.

Augustine has answered it elsewhere. It has a double signification. *Confession* is the voice of *adoration* as well as *penitence*. This twofold acceptation gives its significance to the 'Confessions.' They stand alone. Others have written autobiographies, memoirs, religious lives; Augustine alone has written Confessions.*

But he holds his soliloquy in such tones that men also can hear,† "Why do I tell Thee so much? Not, surely, that Thou mayest know them by me, but I waken up new affections towards Thee, and the affections of those who read these things. I have spoken, and will speak on, and this I do from love of Thy love."‡ Charity urges him to this course; for he has been a Bishop of the Church for two years, and he hopes that his example will excite "the heart of some not to sleep in despair, and say I *cannot*, but rather to waken up in the love of Thy mercy, and in the sweetness of Thy grace." The curious ear of man is not, cannot be, at his heart.§ But he will proclaim what

* "Et laudantis et gementis."
—Enarrat. Ps. xci.

† "Ego quoque, Domine, etiam
sic tibi confiteor, ut *audient*

homines."—'Confess.' x. 3.

‡ 'Confess.' xi. 1.

§ "Auris eorum non est ad cor
meum."—*Ibid.*

he is. "With a consciousness, which is not doubtful, but certain and plenary, O Lord! I love Thee, Thou hast transfixed my heart with the arrow of Thy word, and I have loved Thee!"

The saintly Bishop had not lived so little in the world as to be ignorant of its ways. He knew that he was baring his breast to his own enemies, and those of the Church. The sobs which he uttered at the feet of Christ; the long cry in which he wailed out the sins and offences of his youth to his reconciled Father; the broken words of those short sentences which seem to set themselves to the mystic music of some penitential chant at the foot of an altar; he had allowed the world to hear them, and the world was not likely to let them drop.

Everyone is aware that Augustine, in his 'Confessions,' repeatedly touches upon that kind of sin, which every motive of moral prudence as well as of natural delicacy should lead ordinary people to conceal from others, or to confess with the most guarded generality. It is not only that between us and other men there is drawn a veil of flesh, through which God only has the right to look, and where the glance of a mortal eye inflames that wounded human modesty which remains in every nature that is not quite brutal. By such confessions we may injure our own souls, retouching the faded lines of dangerous pictures, regretting, it may be, that we have not sinned more, and that we have lost opportunities.* We may also do incalculable injury to others by unintentional suggestions. What shall we say of this element in Augustine's writing?

* "Recordari volo transactas | eas amem; sed ut amem te, Deus
 fœditates meas, et carnales cor- | meus."—'Confess.' ii. 1; cf. iv. 1.
 ruptiones animæ meæ; non quod

His example, in his public confession, stands out almost alone for profit and for wonder, not for imitation. He had never been a profligate in the ordinary acceptation of the term. Measured by the standard of the world even now, much more by that of the society in which he lived, he might have passed without much censure.* More unworthy still is the comparison which others have instituted between Rousseau and the young Augustine. At the very moment when two men are plunged in sensual sin, there may be a distinction between them. The one feels that he is plunged in a hell of filth, only less dreadful than the hell of fire. The other loves what "the degraded soul unworthily admires." He has a deliberate sympathy with his position, and with those who are like him.† He is perfectly satisfied, and thinks it is well for him to be here. One has fallen into the sty, the other lives in it. Of his guilty connection, Rousseau exclaims, "It stood me instead of all. The future did not touch me, or only as a prolonged present." But even in the first flush of youthful passion Augustine exhausts all the energy of his imagination to find language which may give us a conception of his misery. "O my God! My

* Thus writes one of the highest authority upon Augustine:—"Talis erat, etiam quum ipse foris esset, ut ab eis qui erant intus, vir bonus haberi possit, in suo quidem genere. Adolescens habuit concubinam, quod humanæ permittunt leges. Hæc non repudiata sed erepta, adamavit alteram. Verum utrique servavit conjugii fidem, quam probitatem hodie non temere reperias in sacerdotibus aut Abbatibus."—August. tom. i. (Basil. 1569). Erasmus Alfonso Fonseccæ Archiep. Toletano. "In illis annis unam habebam, sed *unam*

tamen, ei quoque servans tori fidem."—"Confess.' iv. 2. When she returned from Italy to Africa, vowing herself to a pure and single life, he formed, for a time, a second connection of the same nature, intended to be limited to the two years during which he was waiting for a wife (vi. 15). It is only right to notice the dark shadow which hangs over Augustine's youth from such expressions as those in 'Confess.' iii. 1, ii. 2.

† Οἷτινες οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ συνευδοκοῦσι τοῖς πρᾶσοῦσι.—Rom. i. 32.

mercy! with how much of gall, in how much goodness, didst Thou besprinkle that sweetness. In all my joy, I was bound with fetters of anguish, that I might be beaten with the burning iron rods of jealousy, suspicion, fear, anger, and discord." *

Correspondent to this difference between the men is the difference of their Confessions. No man ever read the earlier portion of Rousseau's without a permanent taint, or a permanent trial, to his soul. We feel that he took an artist's reflective pleasure in every line of the picture. It is the thoughtful and deliberate masterpiece of a corrupted imagination. On the contrary, no prurient persons ever said of Augustine as they have been known to say of certain in our own time, who make confessions in fashionable drawing-rooms, "Come and hear him. He is so charming, and has been so wicked, and will tell us all about it." In an age which must have excitement, people run after grotesque converts, to hear anecdotes from the life of some poor sinner, with the rouge scarcely washed from her faded face. Religious diaries are written, with a view to ultimate publication, by persons who occasionally look surreptitiously to see if any one is listening behind the half-closed door. But here there is a coldness and a whiteness as of winter snow over the crater of the extinct volcano. There is a reserve in all that effusion. The style is without that affected periphrastic delicacy, which is so essentially indelicate. His heart might be ulcerated, and leave trailing drops of blood; † he is determined that no sentimental sighs shall be heaved over the parting-scene between his mistress and himself. The mother of his lost Adeodatus

* 'Confess.' iii. 1.

† 'Confess.' vi. 15. See 'Essais de Littérature et de Morale,' par Saint-Marc Girardin—"La péri-

phrase est souvent plus indécente que le mot"—ii. 11. Art. "St. Augustin."

walks veiled and spectral, a memory without a name, from her sixteen years of shame, into the presence of God, with a sigh of penitence and a prayer of hope. Among the most brutal lines that Byron ever degraded his marvellous genius by writing—it is saying much—are those in which he attributes to the ‘Confessions’ the power of awakening an envy of the youthful transgressions of the saintly bishop.*

III.

I proceed to attempt a sketch of the life of Augustine, so far as is necessary for understanding the ‘Confessions.’ This will be followed by more detailed reference to the most interesting passages in it.

i. He was born at Thagaste, in Numidia, on the 13th of November A.D. 354, his father’s name Patricius, his mother’s Monica. Shortly after the sixteenth year of his age, he fell into sin, lost his father, and was supported during his education at Carthage by his mother and a wealthy friend, named Romanianus. In the second year of his sojourn there, he became the father of Adeodatus. In the twentieth year of his age, he threw himself with all the fervour of his nature into Manichæism, and with the zeal of a neophyte sought to make proselytes from among his friends. His mother wept over his perversion, but never lost the hope of his return. At Thagaste, he taught grammar for a while, but shortly returned to Carthage, and acted as a teacher of rhetoric. In the course of the year 383, he is

* “Sermons he read, and lectures he endured,
And homilies, and lives of all the saints;
To Jerome and to Chrysostom inured,
He did not take such studies for restraints.
But how faith is acquired, and then insured,

So well not one of the aforesaid paints
As Saint Augustine in his fine Confessions,
Which make the reader *envy his transgressions.*

This, too, was a sealed book to little Juan.”

thoroughly convinced of the hollowness of Manichæism, but falls into academic scepticism. After many wanderings in an inextricable forest labyrinth, "nothing remained but to beseech Divine Providence to aid me, with many a tearful and pathetic cry."* But before the crisis comes, ambition occupies his spirit for a while. He sails to Rome, and, after teaching rhetoric for a short time in that city, is sent at the public expense as an endowed Professor of Rhetoric to Milan. There the preaching of St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, gives him *light*, but *strength* he has not yet. In his own words: "I did not want to be more certain *of* Thee, but more confirmed *in* Thee. The Saviour commended Himself to my judgment as the Way, but I shrank from walking through His narrowness. I had no answer to make to Thee, saying, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' And as Thou gavest me demonstration of the Truth from every side, I had no answer to make to my convictions, but slow and drowsy words, 'Presently, yes, presently; let me be for a while.' Ah! those *presentlies* never presented themselves; those *little whiles* lasted a long while."† Besides, he is unable to shake off the thralldom of sensuality. As in so many other cases, the reading of St. Paul's Epistles is greatly blessed to his soul, and at last he is definitely won to Christ by a text, as if by a voice from Heaven.

ii. Instead of attempting a meagre outline of the life of Augustine, let me refer to three of its leading scenes, at Carthage, at Milan, and at Ostia.

1. At Carthage.

To understand Augustine's writings in general, and more especially his 'Confessions,' we must know something of the Roman-African life of his day. The

* 'De Util. Cred.' c. viii.

† 'Confess.' viii. 1-5.

civilised life of Africa found its centre at Carthage—the Rome of Africa, as it was frequently called. It has been observed that we think of no other Carthage than that of Hannibal. But Carthage, from the period of its new foundation under Augustus (A.D. 29), was essentially a Roman city. Carthage was the child of Roman genius in its grandest hour. It was described as a most glorious city. Its streets, glittering with gold and gay with marbles, ran in long parallel lines. It possessed numerous schools, and affected to rival Rome as a creator of Latin literature.* The Latin-speaking African was—

“A Roman moulded by that sun and sea
Which lit and laved the infant Hannibal.”†

Among the sights of Carthage there was one of peculiar fascination to the susceptible boy. The spectacles of the Latin theatre in Carthage were numerous and splendid. They furnished fuel for the unquiet fire of his soul, scenes which haunted his imagination, and passages which he loved himself to declaim. The Christian Church, it need hardly be observed, abhorred the pagan theatre. The idolatrous rites, the lascivious attitudes, the gladiatorial shows, which were its inseparable accompaniments, were equally opposed to the dogmatic Monotheism, to the purity, and to the mercy, of the Gospel. The very fact of a man's habitual absence from the theatre afforded presumptive proof that he was a Christian.‡ In his ‘Confessions,’ Augustine goes more deeply to the root of the matter. Supposing obscenity and idolatry to be banished from the stage, and taking it at its best estate, are its effects morally

* “*Dux tantæ urbes Latinarum
litterarum artifices, Roma atque
Carthago.*”—August. ‘*Epis ad
Dioscorum,*’ tom. ii. 257.

† ‘*Poems by Lord Houghton,*
p. 286, “*Fall of Alypius.*”

‡ “*Spectacula non visitas.*”—
‘*Mim. Fel. Octavius,*’ cap. ii.

wholesome? Is it good that the passive emotions should be excited, when no active exertion is intended to follow, when the very intensity of the emotion is a delicate luxury whose end is itself? Augustine seems to doubt it.

"In another, and that feigned and personated misery, that acting attracted me the most vehemently which drew tears from me. What marvel that, an unhappy sheep, straying from Thy flock, and impatient of Thy keeping, I became infected with a foul disease? And hence the love of griefs; not such as should sink deep into me; for I loved not to suffer what I loved to look on; but such as upon hearing their fictions should lightly scratch the surface; upon which, as on envenomed nails, followed inflamed swelling, imposthumes, and a putrefied sore. My life being such, was it life, O my God?"*

He anticipates Bishop Butler and Dugald Stewart in tracing the injurious nature of the "refined and selfish luxury of the sensibility which terminates in imagination."

2. We turn to Milan for the scenes of his conversion and baptism. It were almost sacrilege to tell the story in other than his own words:—

"But when a deep consideration had from the secret bottom of my soul drawn together and heaped up all my misery in the sight of my heart, there arose a mighty storm, bringing a mighty shower of tears. Which that I might pour forth wholly in its natural expressions, I rose from Alypius: solitude was suggested to me as fitter for the business of weeping; so I retired so far that even his presence could not be a burden to me. Thus was it then with me, and he perceived something of it; for something I suppose I had spoken,

* 'Confess.' iii. 2 (Oxford Translation).

wherein the tones of my voice appeared choked with weeping, and so had risen up. He then remained where we were sitting, most extremely astonished. I cast myself down I know not how, under a certain fig-tree, giving full vent to my tears: and the floods of mine eyes gushed out an acceptable sacrifice to Thee. I sent up these sorrowful words: 'How long—how long? To-morrow, and to-morrow? Why not now? why not is there this hour an end to my uncleanness?'

"So was I speaking, and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when, lo! I heard from a neighbouring house a voice, as of boy or girl, I know not, chanting, and oft repeating, 'Take up and read; Take up and read.' Instantly my countenance altered, I began to think most intently, whether children were wont in any kind of play to sing such words: nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So checking the torrent of my tears, I arose, interpreting it to be no other than a command from God, to open the book, and read the first chapter I should find. Eagerly then I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there had I laid the volume of the Apostle, when I arose thence. I seized, opened, and in silence read that section on which my eyes first fell: 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh,'* in concupiscence. No further would I read; nor needed I; for instantly at the end of this sentence, by a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away."

The story passes on immediately to another scene at Milan, during the Holy Week of the same year. It was the memorable time when the Empress Justina,

* Rom. xiii. 13, 14.

the mother of Valentinian, was persecuting Ambrose. To soothe the anxiety of the people, during their protracted watches, the church echoed with Psalms and Hymns, after the Oriental fashion. Among the voices of those who accepted with delight the beautiful innovation (innovations are not always grievances) was that of a woman, not old, but of venerable aspect, and of a young man, who stood near her in the throng. The name of the mother was Monica, the wife of a municipal magistrate of the petty town of Thagaste, in Numidia. Monica, indeed, had neither the rank nor the heroic achievements of the ladies spoken of by Tertullian and Jerome. She could never have worn a veil which cost 25,000 golden pieces, nor hung immense revenues from her ears. She was not one of those haughty matrons who had never seen the sea but from marble terraces at Ostia, or in a gilded trireme, who yet left home with intrepid joy to spend long years in prayer and toil by the cradle at Bethlehem, or the sepulchre at Jerusalem.* Yet she had been a model of the commonplace yet glorious duties of a wife and mother. Though no longer young, and of delicate constitution, she had faced the long and terrible passage from Africa to Italy. In a tempest, when the rude sailors were prostrate with fright, she cheered them with the assurance of safety, promised by God to her in a vision.† Her object was to rejoin this son, Aurelius Augustinus, a celebrated Professor of Rhetoric at Milan. Brought up in the Catholic faith, Augustine had been lured from it by the double seduction of the senses and the intellect. A terrible question weighed upon that inquisitive spirit, for which metaphysical problems

* Tertullian, 'De Virg.' ii. 1; de St. Augustin,' ii. 436, 437.
 St. Hieron. 'Epist. de Blesillâ.' † 'Confess.' vi. 1.
 See quotations in Nourisson, 'Phil.

possessed more than the fascination of romance. The origin of evil, the kindred enigmas which troubled Job in the desert, and Solomon upon his throne; the imperfections of nature—the suffering that exists through creation under the reign of passionless laws—the sin that defiles every created soul; these insoluble mysteries would not allow his speculations to rest. The answers which the Church has to give, almost entirely practical and regulative, did not satisfy his metaphysical instincts. He was brought by circumstances into contact with the Manichæan heresy. The Persian Manes, professedly a Christian, taught that there were two uncreated, co-equal, co-eternal Principles, whose infinite struggles impress their character upon a chequered universe, and shoot their separate lines of light and darkness through the texture of existence. The language of Christian Theology was partly employed by this strange heresy. Augustine's heart was soothed by the specious retention of the sacred names of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. His intellect was won by the Pantheistic theory that God was an immense and lucid body, of which he was a particle,* and his conscience quieted by the convenient assurance that it is not our personality which sins, but a dark and undefinable subsistence which sins in us.† Let us not look upon such speculations as parts of an obsolete chapter in the history of human error. Mr. Mill, in his 'Autobiography,' tells us that while his father looked upon dogmatic atheism as absurd, "he found it impossible to believe that a world so full of evil was the work of an author combining Infinite Power with Perfect Righteousness. . . . The Sabæan, or Manichæan, theory of a Good and an Evil Principle struggling against each other for the government of the Universe, he would not

* 'Confess.' iv. 16.

† 'Confess.' v. 10.

equally have condemned, and I have heard him express surprise that no one had revived it in our times."*

Like some converts to the Church of Rome at the present day, Augustine made proselytes without having thoroughly convinced himself. His taste in preaching, as in other things, was for that which is solid and profound. He thirsted for the wine of truth, and the beauty or livery of the cup-bearer was nothing to him.† He had longed to hear the great preacher of the Manichæans, Faustus; but he soon found that the great orator, who could say whatever he pleased, had little or nothing to say. Faustus had but a scanty stock—a few orations of Cicero, a very few books of Seneca, some poets, and the narrow literature of his own sect. However skilfully handled, not much could be made of such poor materials. Augustine soon knew at what price to value them. But when he hears Ambrose at Milan, he detects at once the ring of the true metal.

"To Milan I came, to Ambrose the Bishop, known to the whole world as among the best of men, Thy devout servant; whose eloquent discourse did then plentifully dispense unto Thy people the flour of Thy wheat, the gladness of Thy oil, and the sober inebriation of Thy wine. And I listened diligently to him preaching to the people, not with that intent I ought, but, as it were trying his eloquence, whether it answered the fame thereof, or flowed fuller or lower than was reported; and I hung on his words attentively; but of the matter I was as a careless and scornful looker-on; and I was delighted with the sweetness of his discourse, more recondite, yet in manner less winning and harmonious, than that of Faustus."‡

Of Ambrose, Monica had persuaded him to become

* Mill's 'Autobiography,' p. 40.

† 'Confess.' v. 6.

‡ 'Confess.' v. 13 (Oxford Translation).

the hearer. Much is said in this part of the 'Confessions' of a matter justly distasteful to us, the discovery of the relics of two martyrs, Gervasius and Protasius, whose bodies are said to be still lying under the High Altar of the Ambrosian Basilica at Milan.* Augustine mentions that a blind man was restored to sight. However that may have been, another miracle in the spiritual order was passing in the midst of these crowded scenes—the cessation of a spiritual blindness. At the moment when the intense heat and the absorbing business of the vintage naturally brought his vacation, the Public Professor of Rhetoric announced an indefinite suspension of his lectures. The excuse was failing health, the cause was the conversion of his soul to Christ. Some of us will remember the words of Pascal, traced upon a scrap of paper, and carefully kept to his dying day, sewed up in his clothes: "*Joie, pleurs de joie, renonciation totale et douce.*" Twelve centuries before, a cry, set upon the same note, but less reserved and restrained, rose from the soul of Augustine to the ear of Christ: "During those days I could not be satiated with a wondrous sweetness in considering the depth of Thy counsels for the salvation of man How much did I weep in Thy Psalms and Hymns, being exceedingly moved by the sweet voices of Thy Church. The strains flowed into my ear, and the truth dropped into my heart, and holy affections sprang up therefrom; and sweet and abundant tears ran down, and it was well for me with them."†

The preaching of Ambrose was only one out of many causes working together to this blessed consummation. Sweet but broken fragments of the Gospel were always

* 'Calendarium Ambrosianum,' 1874, p. 22.

† 'Confess.' ix. 6.

lingering in his memory. While yet a boy, in a dangerous illness, he called for Baptism with passionate entreaty; it was put off for an exaggerated notion of the heinousness of post-baptismal sin.* "His yet tender heart," he tells us, "drank in the Saviour's name with his mother's milk, and kept it long and deep; and whatever teaching lacked that name, however polished, adorned with culture, and even true, could not win his whole being."† The prayers and tears of his mother, the pleadings of his friends, the child's voice heard under the fig-tree, completed the work. On Holy Saturday, 387, Augustine, Alypius, Adeodatus (aged fifteen), went down into the font, still shown in the old Ambrosian Basilica. They were thrice plunged in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Then they passed across the church, in the white robes of their regeneration.

3. A few days more, and Augustine, Monica, Adeodatus, and their friends have travelled as far as Ostia, intending to embark for Africa, after resting from so long a journey.

Many here will probably recollect the appearance of Ostia—the desolate ruins by the yellow Tiber, shortly after passing from the trees and violet-tufted hedgerows of the Campagna, over the vast marsh and by the salt-pits, looking to the sombre belts of pine by Castel Fusano. I know not whether any of us have associated that ruin, apparently of an inn or house of reception, close by the river, with the place where the travellers sojourned. At all events, somewhere on that once gay and busy but now melancholy spot stood Augustine and Monica, as they have been represented by the pencil of Ary Scheffer, in the garden at Ostia, in sight of a sea lit up by a thousand fires, and under a sky

* 'Confess.' i. 11.

† 'Confess.' iii. 4.

without a cloud.* Let Augustine himself tell what none can tell as well.

“The day now approaching whereon she was to depart this life, it came to pass, Thyself, as I believe, by Thy secret ways so ordering it, that she and I stood alone, leaning in a certain window, which looked into the garden of the house where we now lay, at Ostia; where removed from the din of men, we were recruiting from the fatigues of a long journey, for the voyage. We were discoursing then together, alone, very sweetly; and ‘forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,’† we were inquiring between ourselves in the presence of the Truth, which Thou art, of what sort the eternal life of the saints was to be, which ‘eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man.’‡ But yet we gasped, with the mouth of our heart, after those heavenly streams of Thy fountain, ‘the fountain of life,’§ which is with Thee; that being bedewed thence according to our capacity, we might in some sort meditate upon so high a mystery.”

“We were saying then: If to any the tumult of the flesh were hushed; hushed the images of earth, and waters, and air; hushed also the poles of heaven, yea the very soul be hushed to herself, and by not thinking on self surmount self; hushed all dreams and imaginary revelations, every tongue and every sign, and whatsoever exists only in transition, since if any could hear, all these say, ‘We made not ourselves, but He made us that abideth for ever’—if then having uttered this, they too should be hushed, having roused only our ears to Him who made them, and He alone speak, not by

* Here, and in the pages immediately preceding, my memory is haunted by the eloquence of M. de Broglie.

† Phil. iii. 13.

‡ 1 Cor ii. 9.

§ Ps. xxxvi. 9.

them, but by Himself, that we may hear His Word, not through any tongue of flesh nor Angel's voice, nor sound of thunder, nor in the dark riddle of a similitude, but might hear Whom in these things we love, might hear His Very Self without these;—could this be continued on, and other visions of kind far unlike be withdrawn, and 'this one ravish, and absorb, and wrap up its beholder amid these inward joys, so that life might be for ever like that one moment of understanding which now we sighed after; were not this, 'Enter into thy Master's joy'?* And when shall that be? When 'we shall all rise again,' though we 'shall not all be changed'?†

"Such things was I speaking, and even if not in this very manner, and these same words, yet, Lord, Thou knowest, that in that day when we were speaking of these things, and this world with all its delights became, as we spake, contemptible to us, my mother said, 'Son, for mine own part I have no further delight in anything in this life. What I do here any longer, and to what end I am here, I know not, now that my hopes in this world are accomplished. One thing there was, for which I desired to linger for a while in this life, that I might see thee a Catholic Christian before I died. My God hath done this for me more abundantly, that I should now see thee withal, despising earthly happiness, become His servant: what do I here?'

"What answer I made her unto these things, I remember not. For scarce five days after, or not much more, she fell sick of a fever; and in that sickness one day she fell into a swoon, and was for a while withdrawn from these visible things. We hastened round her; but she was soon brought back to her

* Matt. xxv. 21.

† 1 Cor. xv. 51, Vulg. &c.

senses; and looking on me and my brother standing by her, said to us inquiringly, 'Where was I?' And then looking fixedly on us, with grief amazed; 'Here,' saith she, 'shall you bury your mother.' I held my peace and refrained weeping; but my brother spake something, wishing for her, as the happier lot, that she might die, not in a strange place, but in her own land. Whereat, she with anxious look, checking him with her eyes, for that he still 'savoured such things,' and then looking upon me; 'Behold,' saith she, 'what he saith:' and soon after to us both, 'Lay,' she saith, 'this body anywhere; let not the care for that any way disquiet you: this only I request, that you would remember me at the Lord's altar, wherever you be.' And having delivered this sentiment in what words she could, she held her peace, being exercised by her growing sickness."

"I heard afterwards also, that when we were now at Ostia, she with a mother's confidence, when I was absent, one day discoursed with certain of my friends about the contempt of this life, and the blessing of death: and when they were amazed at such courage which Thou hadst given to a woman, and asked, 'Whether she were not afraid to leave her body so far from her own city?' she replied, 'Nothing is far to God; nor was it to be feared lest at the end of the world He should not recognise whence He were to raise me up.' On the ninth day then of her sickness, and the fifty-sixth year of her age, and the three-and-thirtieth of mine, was that religious and holy soul freed from the body."*

IV.

I shall now proceed to say in conclusion why this book is especially valuable.

1. It appears to me to be especially worthy of study

* 'Confess.' ix. 10, 11 (Oxford Translation).

by educated young men. I would venture to hope that a copy of it in the original may sometimes be packed up in the knapsack for a Swiss or Highland excursion. I may point out *three* characteristics which seem to make it worthy of such a distinction.

(a) The extraordinary felicity of its occasional sentences. All minor blemishes are more than redeemed by the exquisitely subtle tenderness and thoughtfulness peculiar to himself. The misfortune of provincialism was not in his case an altogether unmixed evil. The African style was evidently characterised by bold, incisive phrases. Under that burning sky the Latin language seemed to lose something of its massiveness, and to acquire, in return a speculative subtlety.

The pages of the 'Confessions' are full of sentences which bear the same relation to the spiritual life as some of Shakespeare's sentences to general human life; such as these: "Thou hast made the heart for Thyself, and it is restless even until it finds rest in Thee;" "Thine omnipotence is not far from us, when we are far from Thee."*

(b) Leibnitz has accused the philosophical speculation of Augustine as having less of light than of heat and impetuosity. Yet I will venture to recommend the study of the passages in the 'Confessions' upon time and memory as pieces of metaphysical speculation and mental analysis worthy of Kant or Maine de Biran. But better than any positive result of his speculations is that fresh admiration for the glories and depths of man's nature. A passage in his chapter on Memory shows us that he anticipated the subtle beauty of Shelley's lines—

"Odours, when sweet violets die,
Live within the memory."

* 'Confess.' xi. 11-28; x. 8-24.

“These things I do within, in the vast hall of my memory;” and then he exclaims, “And men go to admire the heights of the mountains, and the starry heaven, and the billows of the sea, and *leave themselves!*”

I may cite one other passage as an instance of the way in which mental observation is brought to bear upon the spiritual life.

“Yea, so far prevails the illusion of the image, in my soul and in my flesh, that, when asleep, false visions persuade to that which, when waking, the true cannot. Am I not then myself, O Lord my God? And yet there is so much difference betwixt myself and myself, within that moment wherein I pass from waking to sleeping, or return from sleeping to waking! Where is reason then, which, awake, resisteth such suggestions? And should the things themselves be urged on it, it remaineth unshaken. Is it clasped up with the eyes? is it lulled asleep with the senses of the body? And whence is it that often even in sleep we resist, and mindful of our purpose, and abiding most chastely in it, yield no assent to such enticements? And yet so much difference there is, that when it happeneth otherwise, upon waking we return to peace of conscience: and by this very difference discover that we did not what yet we be sorry that in some way it was done in us.

“Art Thou not mighty, God Almighty, so as to ‘heal all the diseases of my soul,* and by Thy more abundant grace to quench even the impure motions of my sleep! Thou wilt increase, Lord, Thy gifts more and more in me, that my soul may follow me to Thee, disentangled from the birdlime of concupiscence. For that nothing of this sort should have, over the pure affections even of a

* Ps. ciii. 3.

sleeper, the very least influence, not even such as a thought would restrain,—to work this, not only during life but even at my present age, is not hard for the Almighty, Who art 'able to do above all that we ask or think.'* But what I yet am in this kind of my evil, have I confessed unto my good Lord, 'rejoicing or trembling,† in that which Thou hast given me, and bemoaning that wherein I am still imperfect; hoping, that Thou wilt perfect Thy mercies in me, even to perfect peace, which my outward and inward man shall have with Thee, when 'death shall be swallowed up in victory.'‡ "How many people," it has been well asked by M. Ferraz, "are there even among those who are called pious whom their religious scruples and a noble care for their spiritual improvement have led to such profound self searching? The observations of the psychologist are happily blended with the penitent's examination of conscience."§

(c) Very interesting and instructive will it be found by the class of students to whom I have referred to trace Augustine's judgment upon classical antiquity.

In an age like that in which he lived, it is evident that classical literature must have been estimated differently, not only by different minds, but by the same minds from different points of view.

Augustine's mature and definite judgment on heathen philosophy is not difficult to gather, in spite of some apparent inconsistencies of expression. The Gospel did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. Nor did it come to destroy the crude fruit of human wisdom, but to form and mellow it. He never grounded faith upon an universal scepticism. Opposed as Aristotle

* Eph. iii. 20.

† Ps. ii. 11.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 54.

§ Ferraz, 'Psychol. de S. Augustin.'

and Plato might seem to be, he believed that one consistent mass had been strained out by the cautious wisdom of successive ages. Of Cicero and Plato he speaks with almost unvarying respect. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? In the wonderful providence of God, the first little flame of Divine love had been kindled in his heart by them, though the odour and the blaze were from the unguents of Holy Scripture.* To the 'Hortensius' of Cicero he owed the first prelude to conversion, the first initiation into those high problems which are the intellectual principles of the spiritual life.

Augustine was a predestined Platonist. Indeed, as the mediæval Christian thinkers were of the school of Aristotle, so the earlier Christian thinkers were of the school of Plato. "Whatever is said in Plato lives in Augustine."

Turning from philosophy to literature, we find that Augustine had scruples as to his fondness for Terence and Virgil. In reference to Terence, this can easily be accounted for. Indeed, his very connection with the stage was a strong objection to him in Augustine's judgment. He could not forget the voluptuous excitement throbbing in the very air, the sanguinary fascination of the Circus, which he details with so masterly a touch in the case of the fall of Alypius. The spirit of that incident; the way in which the young man, "audacious rather than strong," drinks in delirious inebriation as the blood of the gladiator flows upon the

* This is his language to Romanianus, "Nunquam cessavimus inhiantes in philosophiam. . . . Nondum aderat ea flamma, quæ summa nos arreptura erat, cum ecce tibi libri quidam pleni bonas res Arabicas ubi exhalarent in nos, ubi illi flammulæ instilla-

runt pretiosissimi unguenti guttas paucissimas, incredibile, Romaniane, incredibile, et ultra quod fortasse de me, et tu credis, etiam mihi ipso de meipso incredibile incendium concitarunt." — 'C. Acad.' lib. ii. 2, tom. i. 425.

arena of the Colosseum, is powerfully reproduced by Lord Houghton :—

“ Two natures separate as sun and snow,
 Battling to death to make a Roman show.
 ‘Habet—Hoc habet—Habet!’ rose a cry:
 As if the Circus were one mighty mouth,
 Invading the deep vale of quiet sky
 With avalanche melted in the summer drouth.
 Articulate tumult from old earth upborne,
 Delight and ire and ecstasy and scorn.” *

Even in reference to Terence, he will not accuse the words, which are elect and precious vessels, but the wine of devils which we are given to quaff in them.†

His severity towards Virgil has an exaggerated sound. But it is not the invective of the bigoted who cannot understand, nor the antipathy of the frigid, who cannot feel. It is the sensitiveness of a penitent heart, trembling at the recollection of its passions.

Wherever the Latin language was spoken, the writings of Virgil had acquired a kind of popularity which seems at first sight unaccountable. It requires culture to appreciate such exquisite finish, such curious felicity. Yet lines of Virgil are scrawled on the poorest tombs among the Catacombs, and scratched upon the walls of Pompeii by the hands of the lowest of the people. We may find the explanation partly in that pathetic tenderness which, as has been well said, makes Virgil the first of the moderns. The people excuse refinement when it is pathetic. They pardon the finish of the line when they can still see that it is written by one whose eyes were moistened with a tear. To this peculiarity of Virgil's genius, no more delicate tribute has ever been paid than the sweet and burning tears shed by the passionate and imaginative boy, and for

* ‘Confess.’ vi. 8. ‘Poems by Lord Houghton,’ 260, 261.

† ‘Confess.’ i. 16.

which the bishop so bitterly reproached himself, "Tantillus puer et tantus peccator." To estimate fully the enchantment which Virgil exercised over Augustine, we must turn to those treatises of his which fill up a gap in the 'Confessions.' After his memorable conversion, and resignation of his professorship, his friend Verecundus kindly lent him his villa at Cassiciacum.* There he retired for some months to prepare himself for his baptism, accompanied by Monica, by the son whom he was so soon to lose, and by a select circle of African friends. There, in the evening generally, after their letters were written, and the superintendence of the farm completed for the day, the party discussed philosophical questions. A singular freedom and toleration breathed through the conferences of these delightful days. Cassiciacum† was situated in a

* 'Confess.' ix. 3.

† Local tradition identifies Cassiciacum with Cassago, a village about eight leagues north-east of Milan. The oldest authority for this is, however, a note in a parish registry, stating *memorie proditum esse*, that Augustine had sojourned in the place. Manzoni gives strong etymological reasons against the substitution of *ago* for *iacum*. Besides this, the view from Cassago is commonplace, and by no means agrees with Augustine's indications. On the contrary, *Casciago*, another Lombard town, in the opinion of Manzoni and Cossa presents no etymological objection. "It is situated on a prominence at the foot of a group of hills. On its western horizon is Monte Rosa, and the line of the Alps to their junction with the Apennines. To the south-east, a vast opening in which sight is lost; to the east and north-east, the mountains of Bergamasqui and of the Lake of

Como; within this magnificent framework, a part of the Lago Maggiore, four other small lakes nearer; further off, the entire plain, like the hills, sowed with villas, towns, and villages, several of which at least must have existed in the time of Augustine." Another circumstance is mentioned of much importance in deciding the question. At Casciago there is a little torrent which is frequently dry, but which has enough water in autumn to justify the "*silicibus irruens*" of Augustine, and which in one place is pent up between two rocks, so as to admit of being described as "*angustiis canalis intertrusa*." There is also a small valley falling off into a slope, and covered with a meadow, which agrees exactly with the words, "*ad pratium descendere*," in "*pratuli propinqua descendere*." But at Cassago, there is no running water at any season. See Manzoni's letter to M. Poujoulat upon the locality of Cassiciacum.

country of lakes and hills, upon the first stage of the Alps on the side of Lombardy. In that fair spot, "full of the serenity of the Italian sky, and the verdure of the valleys of Switzerland," the time passed away in a quiet and uneventful happiness. In the narrative of these months at Cassiciacum, Virgil is repeatedly mentioned. Upon the lower Alpine slopes—

"Beneath them spread like a green sea
The waveless plain of Lombardy,
Bounded by the vaporous air,
Islanded by cities fair"—

in the meadow-lawn of the farm of Verecundus, during one of those summer days which seem to give light and clearness to the intellect, as well as to the eye, or in the soft winter sunshine, the cadence of Virgil's lines seems to mingle with the household cares of the little group, with Monica's gentle house-work, and the lowing of the oxen.* In our age of business and distraction, we are tempted to ask with the poet—

"What shelter to grow ripe is ours,
What leisure to grow wise?"

* "Disputare coeperamus sole jam in occasum declinante, diesque pœnè totus cum in rebus rusticis ordinandis tum in recensione primi libri Virgilii peractus fuit."—*'Acad.'* lib. i. tom. i. 418. "Interpositis pauculis diebus venit Alypius, et exorto sole clarissimo invitat cœli nitor, et quantum in illis locis hyeme poterat, blandula temperies, in pratum descendere."—*'De Ordine,'* lib. ii. *ibid.* 471. "Tertius autem dies matutinas nubes, quæ nos coegerant in balneum, dissipavit, tempusque pomeridianum candidissimum reddidisset."—*'De Beatâ Vitâ,'* *ibid.* 504. "Septem fere diebus in disputando fuimus otiosi, cum tres

tantum Virgilii libros post primum recenseremus."—*'C. Acad.'* lib. ii. *ibid.* 425. "Quo tamen opere Licentius in poeticum studium sic inflammabatur, ut aliquantum mihi etiam reprimendus videretur. Tandem tamen ad retractandam quam distuleramus de Academicis quæstionem, cum a me, quantum potui, lumen philosophiæ laudaretur, non invitus accessit. Et forte dies ita serenus effulserat, ut nulli prorsus rei magis quam serenandis animis nostris congruere videretur. . . . Maturius itaque solito lectos reliquimus paululumque cum rusticis egimus quod tempus urgebat."—*'C. Acad.'* ii. *ibid.* 426. "Ire coeperam in bal-

We feel that—

“Too fast we live, too much are tried,
Too harassed to attain”

the “sweet calm” or “luminous clearness” of the thinkers of old. We cannot help envying Augustine his seclusion at Cassiciacum. Yet let us remember that it was redeemed afterwards by toils that ended with one of the busiest of human lives. To him, at least, the retreat was not one of idleness. He wished deliberately to place his knowledge upon a certain basis, to understand as well as believe, to reconcile faith with reason, and that in him which thought with that which prayed. Like Butler at twenty-one, Augustine at thirty-three, “proposed the search after truth as the business of his life.” In his own beautiful language, he called upon his soul to “gaze attentively, where the dawn of truth begins to pale and whiten on the horizon.”* After many years, the rest and perfume of those months were still fresh in the old man’s memory. He says, in words that bring before us a picture of green fields and forms stretched under sheltering olives, “Thou, O faithful Promiser, givest to Verecundus for that farm of his at Cassiciacum, where we rested in Thee, from the fierce summer-tide of the world, the pleasant greenery of Thy Paradise, since Thou hast forgiven him his earthly sins in Thy mountain.” But the quiet work of their mornings must soon be over. Before the evening falls, they must lift up their minds to the great problems, that tower before our existence and theirs, like the Alpine heights on which they looked at sunset. It must pass away in a few weeks. From the

neas. Ille enim locus cum cœlo
tristi in agro esse minime pote-
ramus, aptus ad disputandum et
familiaris fuit.”—‘De Ordine,’ lib.

i. 8, *ibid.* 467.

* “Attende, ubi *albescit veritas*.”
—‘Confess.’ xi. 27.

day of baptism to that hot day in August 430, forty-two years off, when in mortal sickness and deep anxiety for his Church and country, the last great man of Africa must lie down in the little chamber at Hippo, with the sounds of the war cries of the besieging Vandals ringing in his ears, he can never know rest again, until the thinker's brain is quiet, and the worker's hand is still. In that day, his eyes will not be fixed upon the pages of Virgil, but upon the penitential Psalms hung before his eyes on the wall opposite to his humble bed. Yet at times, in that busy and holy life, the most musical words which he has heard upon earth, will fall upon the ear of memory, while he is listening most intently to catch the strains that come from the city of God.*

V.

I cannot close these thoughts upon the 'Confessions' without drawing from them, however briefly, lessons deeper and more personal than these. There are parts of this beautiful book which will sound somewhat startling in ordinary Protestant ears.† I say this with a deep conviction that the main lines of it are drawn upon the same platform as our own, and that it suits the spirit of our Church much more than that of the Church of Rome, or of those who occupy the opposite extreme. It could not have been written by one who looked upon the Bishop of Rome as an infallible guide; who regarded the Mother of our Lord as the mediatrix and channel of grace—among all these prayers and

* M. Saisset has pointed out a curious Virgilian reminiscence in 'De Civ. D.' xiv. 27—"Ut sine auctoris illecebroso stimulo infundente gremio uxoris." Cf. *Æneid*, viii. 406: "Conjugis infusus gremio." Another such reminiscence

may be cited—the reference to Dares and Entellus in his letter to Jerome, tom. ii. 'Epist.' 68. See also his letter to Maximus, 'Epist.' 44; and 'Confess.' viii. 2. † See 'Confess.' ix. 7; ix. 13; ix. 11.

burning sighs, there is not one to her; who considered that faith could only be obtained by that melancholy process of the suicide of reason. On the other hand, it is written by one for whom Holy Baptism is the laver of regeneration; for whom the Holy Eucharist is a commemorative sacrifice; for whom the Church is a divine organisation, and sectarianism a misfortune or a sin. Three great lessons which we may draw from it are these:—

1. Entire loyalty to, and enthusiastic admiration of, the Holy Scriptures.

It so happens that two great Christian Fathers of the Latin Church have left us their testimony on this matter. St. Jerome, in his earlier study of the Old Testament, felt constrained to compare the flowing eloquence, the point, the gravity, the softness, of one or other of the great Roman orators with the uncouth alphabet of the Hebrews, and the words that sound as if the speaker panted or hissed.* Augustine tells us that in his pride he “resolved to study the Scriptures, that he might see of what sort they were;” and his conclusion was that “it was unworthy to be compared with the majesty of Tully.”† But the written word is like the Incarnate Word. Outwardly, when we shall see it, it hath no form or comeliness; but when we see it in the light of God, we exclaim, “Fairer than the children of men!” And Jerome, as he looked down the vista of law and prophets, saw broader spaces and richer light than he had beheld beneath the skies of Athens or of Rome. And Augustine hailed the Scripture as “his chaste joy, honeyed with Heaven’s honey and luminous with its light.”

The ‘Confessions’ are full of this love of the Bible.

* St. Hieron. ‘Epist.’ cxxv. 12. See De Broglie, ‘Histoire,’ &c. part iii. tom. ii. 265.

† ‘Confess.’ ii. 5.

May we learn to cry with Augustine, "Wondrous is the depth of Thine oracles, the very surface of which, as it lies open before us, is so winning to Christ's little ones—wondrous is the depth, my God, wondrous the depth. There is fear in entering into it, but it is the fear of honour, and the trembling of love."*

2. A second great lesson which stands out from the 'Confessions,' is the nature of true Repentance.

We are in danger between two opposite errors.

There are those who underrate or ignore it. They forget that the Baptist, our Lord, and His apostle, on the day of Pentecost, alike began with the call to repentance; they teach, or almost teach, *a salvation without repentance*. Others lay too much stress upon repentance, viewed merely as the working of our own mind, forgetting that Jesus has been exalted to *give* repentance and remission of sins; they represent the state of penitence as one long night, scarcely lighted by a ray of hope, and utterly without joy; they almost teach *repentance without salvation*.

But this book while it is a penitential book, is yet a record of the joys of Penitence. In this respect, it is the most Evangelical of books, and we cannot doubt that it is greatly blessed to thousands of souls in the communion of the Church of Rome, which so unjustifiably darkens the pathways of God's penitent children. The respectable Pharisaism of formal religion, the elder brother spirit that is in most of us, views it occasionally with some suspicion. "Thou too," exclaims Augustine, "O loving Father! rejoicest more over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance. And we, too, hear with joy unspeakable when we hear on what exulting shoulders the shepherd carries home the lost sheep;

* 'Confess.' xii. 14.

and how the piece of money is restored to Thy treasure, with exultation of the woman's neighbours; and the joy of the solemnity of Thy house makes tears dash out when it is read concerning Thy younger son, 'For he was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' All things are full of witnesses, crying out, 'So is it.' The conquering commander triumpheth; yet had he not conquered, unless he had fought; and the more peril there was in the battle, so much the more joy is there in the triumph. The storm tosses the sailors, threatens shipwreck; all wax pale at approaching death; sky and sea are calmed, and they are exceeding joyed, as having been exceeding afraid."

"Everywhere the greater joy is ushered in by the greater pain. What means this, O Lord my God, whereas Thòu art everlastingly joy to Thyself, and some things around Thee evermore rejoice in Thee? What means this, that this portion of things thus ebbs and flows alternately displeased and reconciled? Is this their allotted measure? Is this all Thou hast assigned to them, whereas from the highest heavens to the lowest earth, from the beginning of the world to the end of ages, from the angel to the worm, from the first motion to the last, Thou settest each in its place, and realisest each in their season, everything good after its kind? Woe is me! how high art Thou in the highest, and how deep in the deepest! and Thou never departest, and we scarcely return to Thee." *

Let him who would have the most vivid of all commentaries upon the abiding joys of an abiding penitence, upon the difference between the repentance of love and the repentance of fear, read and meditate upon the 'Confessions.' There are times, if he listens, when he will begin to see that the tears of penitents are the

* 'Confess.' viii. 3.

wine of angels, and hear the great deep swellings of the heavenly songs.

3. I close with a still greater thought which may be drawn from the 'Confessions' than even the supreme excellence of Scripture, or the solemn joy of Repentance. I mean, the glory, the beauty, the fulness, the sufficiency, of Jesus.

How clearly does Augustine see that the difference between our righteousness and Christ's—between the righteousness which justifies and the righteousness which is wrought in us by justification—is as great as that between the creature and the Creator,* the finite and the Infinite! How sweetly does he call sinners to Christ! How fully does he preach, not this or that fragment of the Gospel, but the whole Gospel! "There is no rest where you are seeking it. Seek indeed what you are seeking, happiness; but it is not there where you are searching. You are looking for a blessed life in the region and shadow of death. It is not there. How can there be a blessed life when there is no true life at all? And here our very life descended, and bore our death and slew it out of the overflowing abundance of His life; and called aloud to us to return from hence to that secret place from whence He came forth to us; first into that Virgin's womb, where the human creation, our mortal flesh, was knit and wedded to Him, that it might not be for ever mortal. And thence like a bridegroom coming forth out of his chamber, He rejoiced as a giant to run His course. For he lingered not, but ran; crying aloud to us by His words, by His work, by His life, by His death, by His descent, by His ascent, crying aloud that we should return to Him. And He departed from our eyes, that we might enter into our hearts, and find Him there.

* 'Confess.' xii. 15.

For He departed, and, lo! He is here.”* How grandly does He base our redemption, not on questionable theories of the mode in which the Atonement is effectual; not on the agony of our self-appropriation; not on the favourable judgment which we pass upon our own case; not on the answer which we give to the questions, “Are you saved?” “Have you found peace?” but on the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“But the true Mediator, whom in Thy secret mercy Thou hast showed to the humble, and sentest, that by His example also they might learn that same humility; that ‘Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus,’ appeared betwixt mortal sinners and the immortal Just One; mortal with men, just with God: that because the wages of righteousness is life and peace, He might by a righteousness conjoined with God, make void that death of sinners, now made righteous, which He willed to have in common with them. Hence He was showed forth to Holy men of old; that so they, through faith in His Passion to come, as we through faith of it passed, might be saved. For as Man, He was a Mediator; but as the Word He was not in the middle between God and man, because equal to God, and God with God, and together one God.

“How hast Thou loved us, good Father, who ‘sparedst not Thine only Son, but deliveredst Him up for us ungodly’! How hast Thou loved us, for whom ‘He that thought it no robbery to be equal with Thee was made subject even to the death of the cross,’ He alone ‘free among the dead, having power to lay down his life, and power to take it again;’ for us to Thee both Victor and Victim, and therefore Victor because the Victim; for us to Thee Priest and Sacrifice, and therefore Priest because the Sacrifice; making us to

* ‘Confess.’ iv. 12 (Oxford Translation).

Thee, of servants, sons, by being born of Thee, and serving us. Well then is my hope strong in Him, that Thou 'wilt heal all my infirmities,' by Him who 'sitteth at Thy right hand and maketh intercession for us ;' else might I despair. For many and great are mine infirmities, many they are and great ; but Thy medicine is of ample efficacy. We might have thought Thy Word remote from all conflict with man, and despair of ourselves, unless that word were made flesh, and dwelt among us."*

Supreme and unclouded, above all, remains his conviction that for himself and for other human souls Jesus is sufficient. It has been said by some that Augustine's conception of love is too physical and sensual ; by others that his conception of religion is too metaphysical and speculative. Perhaps this is hinted in a beautiful legend of the middle ages. One in vision was rapt into Paradise. Among the elect before the Lamb, he missed Augustine from the great throng. On asking, an angel said, "He is not here ; he is in the highest Heaven. He is before the eternal Trinity, meditating and discoursing for ever of the great mystery."†

Be it so. Yet there are some among us who are twining round themselves chains which seem to be of flowers, but which they will find to be of iron or of adamant. There are others who have lived in the air of modern thought, until the faith of their youth has faded away like a dream. The 'Confessions' are full of the intense conviction of one of the most sensitive and thoughtful of men, that over all the terrible fascination of passion, and in all the more terrible fascination of thought, there is VICTORY through Christ, and REST in Christ.

* 'Confess.' x. 43 (Oxford Translation).

† The 'Golden Legend,' quoted

by Nourisson, 'Philosophie de St. Augustin,' tom. i. 320.

JEREMY TAYLOR'S

'HOLY LIVING AND DYING.'

The 'Holy Living and Dying' the earliest and best devotional manual produced in our Church since the Reformation; the supply of such works scarcely commensurate with the need of them; the immediate success and continued popularity of this book; its value; its interest as an expression of the character of the author; the events and scenes of his life up to the time of his composing it.—The 'Holy Living;' written to supply the want of religious worship and teaching when the public and private ministrations of the clergy were suppressed; its method stated, considered, and exemplified.—The 'Holy Dying;' its occasion, scope, and object; particular passages quoted, and commented on.—The style of the book; Taylor's fertility of illustration; he refers chiefly to ancient authors; with advantage on the whole, but with occasional tendency to overrate the importance of such authorities; examples of this tendency: (1) His citation of the precept contained in the 'Golden Verses' of Pythagoras; the history of this precept, as traced by a recent French writer (*Note*). (2) Reference to the Roman practice of suicide; illustrations from Nature; the devotions at the end of each chapter.—The 'Holy Dying,' a guide for the healthy as well as for the sick; in some respects supplementary to the 'Holy Living;' e.g. in the treatment of the duty of repentance, to which we are impelled not merely by the motives of hope and fear, the hope of heaven and the fear of perdition (as is stated in the 'Holy Living'), but also, and mainly (as is shown in the 'Holy Dying'), by the motive of love.—Conclusion.

"Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord."—ROMANS xiv. 8.

THE Aids to devotion which have been treated of in the previous discourses were produced either in foreign Churches or amongst our non-conforming brethren at home. Inferior to none of these in beauty and useful-

ness is the treatise of which I have to speak ; the work of our own Jeremy Taylor, the Chrysostom, as he has been called, of the English Church. The 'Holy Living and Dying' forms but a small part of his voluminous writings ; nor would he himself have rested upon it his chief claim to the gratitude of posterity ; yet it is the book by which, on account of its universal and permanent interest, he is now best remembered by the world in general.

Exactly a hundred years elapsed between the first promulgation of the Prayer-Book for public worship and the appearance of this, our earliest manual of private devotion. Each of the two books was called forth by a great national emergency ; and though the work of Taylor can lay claim neither to the authority nor to the veneration which attach to the Book of Common Prayer, it is still, after two centuries, the most complete, the most suggestive, and the most delightful book of the kind that we can put into the hands of our people.

The Prayer-Book has ever been the revered companion of the English Churchman in his private devotions, as well as in public worship. With its variety of prayers, exhortations, and selections from Scripture (including the whole of the Psalms of David) it goes far to supply the spiritual wants of our daily life. But many of us, consciously or unconsciously, have need of something more, need of such personal and particular guidance as we cannot expect to find in a manual framed, like the Prayer-Book, only with a view to its public use.

How it was that neither the Divines of the Reformation nor their immediate successors provided for the religion of the closet and the sick chamber, we can readily understand, when we call to mind the circumstances in which they were placed. Being engaged in

a double conflict, with Rome on the one side, and with Puritanism on the other, breathing an atmosphere of controversy, they gave themselves chiefly to exposition of doctrine, to interpretation of Scripture, and to preaching. From that age of polemical ferment there has come down to us a wealth of sermons, dogmatical treatises, meditations and commentaries on the Bible, many of which, like the secular literature of the same period, are even more highly valued at the present day than they were by the generation to whom they were addressed. The attention alike of clergy and laity was engrossed by questions of vital importance affecting the doctrine and discipline of the Church; and it is no wonder if the unobtrusive yearnings for comfort of the sick, the sorrowing, the penitent, the faint-hearted, were little noticed amid the louder din of theological strife; while the abuses of the Confessional, still freshly remembered, would cause a reaction unfavourable to any attempt that might be made to direct the conscience by rule and system, either in books or in personal conference.

Nor was this a merely transient consequence of the great struggle of the Reformation. The causes which originally gave a didactic and controversial character to our Anglican theology have continued in operation, with varying force, almost to the present time. Not unworthy to be compared for learning and eloquence with any of the Churches of Christendom, the English Church has been less conspicuous, has indeed been somewhat wanting, in devotional works of the highest order; and many of her most attached members have consequently had recourse to religious guides extraneous to her communion, such as the elaborate allegory of John Bunyan, the artless effusions of Richard Baxter, or the monastic fervours of Thomas à Kempis.

The 'Holy Living and Dying' is obviously not

addressed to the unlearned and ignorant: and it speaks well both for the culture and for the religious earnestness of the latter half of the seventeenth century that such a book should have passed through so many as nineteen editions within little more than fifty years after its publication.* That it met with immediate acceptance was due not wholly to its intrinsic merits, great as they are, but in part to the opportuneness of its appearance, to the pressing nature of the want which it supplied. But the reputation which it so speedily acquired it never lost. That it was highly esteemed by the courtiers of the reign of Queen Anne, may be inferred from the presentation of a copy of it to the Queen by her haughty favourite the Duchess of Marlborough, as well as from the testimony of Lord Shaftesbury, who says that the devotional works of Bishop Taylor held in his time "a conspicuous place, not only in the study of the divine, but in the glass cupboard of the lady's closet." Later in the eighteenth century there is a still more noble proof of the good influence of this book in the acknowledgment of John Wesley, that when the 'Imitatio Christi' had repelled him by its asceticism, he was led by the perusal of the 'Holy Living and Dying' to dedicate all his life, even "all his thoughts, words, and actions," to the service of God. In the present century, which has witnessed so great a revival of devotional religion, it needed not the encomium which the poet Coleridge bestowed on its author to bring it into more general use.†

Many of you, brethren, I doubt not, have acquired

* The 19th edition is dated 1701.

† Strickland's 'Lives of the Queens of England,' vol. xii. p. 263; Lord Shaftesbury's 'Cha-

racteristics,' vol. iii. Misc. v. 3; Southey's 'Life of Wesley,' p. 31; Coleridge's Preface to 'Sibylline Leaves.'

by the help of this book the habit of holy meditation ; meaning by meditation an active, reflective, assimilative habit of mind, very different from the passive, aimless, listless reverie with which even religious people, if they are not guided to something better, are apt to be content. You have learnt to question yourselves strictly without fear or favour, to discern what you have in you both of good and evil, to make the utmost of the good gifts which you possess, to watch and resist each low selfish motive, to interweave with the tissue of secular thoughts the wholesome chastening remembrance that as you now have to "live unto God," so you have to "die unto God," that you may live unto Him again and for ever. This book has been with you on your sick bed, with you in travel, with you in days of sorrow or loneliness. Few can have read it even once, without laying to heart some of the wise counsels and solemn warnings with which it abounds : and if you will keep it by you, next to your holy books, as a companion of your inner life, not trusting to it absolutely, but using it intelligently and with discernment, I cannot but think you will gain more benefit than you would find in the discursive perusal of a variety of religious manuals ; and there will be instilled into you by degrees something of the author's pious, earnest, sweet, cheerful spirit.

You have not now to learn the value of this book : but it will be further endeared to you, if you can feel that it reflects to you the character of the author ; if, as you read, you can carry along with you the assurance that you have in it the work of no mere theorist, or visionary, or professional advocate, retailing the wisdom of others, offering you armour which he has never proved himself, but of one who, having been lifted up for a short time into great prosperity, was plunged into adversity and visited with sorrow upon sorrow, of one

who, if we could have known him as a friend, would have taught us even better things by his life than he tells us in his book.

Jeremy Taylor stands out as a representative man of his age; the highest example of its eloquence and learning, and no mean exponent of its poetical spirit and earnestness of purpose. By his steadfast adherence to the cause which he espoused, he showed himself a worthy descendant of Rowland Taylor, the Hadleigh martyr; and he several times suffered imprisonment for his unwavering loyalty to his Church and King. In all his troubles he seems to have possessed his soul in peace, and to have been capable of labouring as assiduously amid the turmoil of the camp as within the peaceful quadrangle of his college.

He was born in 1613, the son of a barber or barber-surgeon in the town of Cambridge.* The family had been for many generations landowners in Gloucestershire, and were reduced to honourable poverty by the confiscation of their estate, which was bestowed on Bishop Gardiner after the martyrdom of the brave and learned rector of Hadleigh. The father had sufficient learning, as the son informs us, to "ground his children in grammar and the mathematics;" and he may have perceived some early signs of his son's future greatness when he entered him at Caius College in the University as a "poor scholar," at the age of thirteen. In his academical career the young Jeremy was the contemporary, we would fain believe him to have been the friend, of John Milton. Though in after life a wide

* The materials of this sketch are derived chiefly from Bishop Heber's 'Life of Taylor' (vol. i. of Eden's edition of Taylor's Works, 1854), and Mr. Willmott's charm-

ing biography, entitled, 'Bishop Jeremy Taylor, his Predecessors, Contemporaries, and Successors,' 1847.

gulph was interposed between the poet and the divine, the one becoming secretary to the Protector, the other chaplain to the King, at this time they might be friendly opponents in the dreary exercises of the schools; they might well be companions in lighter and more congenial studies; they might go up to the house of God together; they might be compared for their poetical temperament, for their love of ancient learning, for the beauty of their souls, and for their outward comeliness.

Though ordained while he wanted two years of the canonical age of twenty-three, Taylor quickly became famous for his eloquence in the pulpit. His hearers, in their enthusiasm, likened him, it is said, to some young angel newly descended from the realms of glory. The youthful preacher was soon brought to the notice of Laud, at that time Bishop of London, who made him his chaplain, and caused him to remove to the sister University, where he was elected to a fellowship at All Souls'. Higher marks of favour followed; and before he was twenty-four years old, if the received chronology of his life is to be depended on, he was Rector of Uppingham and chaplain to Charles I. The intimate relation into which he was thus brought with Charles continued to the last, and affected the whole tenor of his life. And the precious keepsake which he received from his royal master, the king's own watch and seals, was not improbably before his eyes, when he wrote the striking chapter of the 'Holy Dying' in which he speaks of the "throbs and little beatings of the watch," and exhorts us "not to forget our time, and to let none of it pass undiscerned; for if we were minute and curious in spending our time, as St. Ambrose and St. Augustine were, we should have no reason to complain of the shortness of our life; it would seem to be very long."*

* 'H. D.' i. 3.

The bright morning of Taylor's life was quickly overcast, though the promise which it gave was fulfilled not the less abundantly for the storm which followed. The parish in which his pastoral experience was gained, the occasional retirement at Oxford, so congenial to his studious disposition, the place at Court, which was the means of his becoming acquainted with some of the high and noble persons of the realm, the softening influences of the home and the family, all, before they had been enjoyed for five years, were taken from him. His wife died ; the rebellion broke out ; he showed his dutiful attachment to the royal cause by following the army, while by publishing his defence of episcopacy he proclaimed himself the uncompromising champion of the Church : and for this double offence he was ejected by the Parliament from his living, and roughly deprived of all his worldly goods.

The Church at that time struggled for her existence as she never has struggled in England either before or since. Several of her most eminent divines, Taylor, Pearson, Chillingworth in the number, joined the army. The exhortations of the preacher were enforced by comparisons freshly drawn from the siege and the battle-field ; and in the 'Holy Living and Dying,' as well as in the sermons of Taylor, we find the marks of his familiarity both with the glorious and the distressing aspects of the soldier's life. He himself had a share in the untoward chances of war ; but his misfortune turned to his advantage ; and he probably has his own case in view when he speaks in this book of Zeno the Stoic escaping from shipwreck with the loss of all his goods, retiring "to the studies of philosophy, to his short cloak and severe life, and giving thanks to God for his prosperous mischance."* Taylor was taken prisoner at

* 'H. L.' ii. 6.

the siege of Cardigan: but falling into the hands of "noble enemies," as he gratefully terms them, he was released and permitted to find a new home at Llanfihangel, in the beautiful vale of the Towey, where he maintained himself by teaching. The old Greek adage, "Either he is dead or he keepeth school," might then have been applied to him, as it was wittily applied by his friend Thomas Fuller to others of the royalist clergy, who were reduced soon afterwards to the like necessity.*

He was now hidden from the world; and in his seclusion he solaced himself with the study of that holy book which has a strain of sympathy for every earthly sorrow and for every heavenward aspiration, the Book of Psalms: he also took part in an edition of the Psalter, which was published in the name of his friend, Lord Hatton. And though he was "without books," he says, "except so many as a man may carry on horseback," he composed the great work which places him among the foremost advocates of toleration, 'The Liberty of Prophesying;' in which he proposed that the field of controversy should be narrowed, and the limits of comprehension enlarged, by the adoption of the Apostles' Creed as the standard of evangelical truth; so that any doctrine not therein contained should not be regarded as an essential part of the faith of a Christian: an opinion in which, as has been observed, he was preceded by Erasmus.†

The eleven or twelve years which he passed in the retirement of the Welsh village were probably the happiest period of his chequered life. How cheerfully he took his reverse of fortune, we learn from what he says of himself, by way of example to us, in the chapter

* *ἢ τέθνηκεν ἢ διδάσκει γράμματα. See Bailey's 'Life of Fuller,' p. 598.

† Milman's 'Life of Erasmus,' p. 137.

of the 'Holy Living' in which he treats of Contentedness: "I am fallen into the hands of publicans and sequestrators; and they have taken all from me. What now? Let me look about me. They have left me sun and moon, fire and water, a loving wife" (for he had married again), "many friends to pity me, and some to relieve me: and I can still discourse, and unless I list, they have not taken away my merry countenance, and my cheerful spirit, and a good conscience: they have left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the Gospel, and my hopes of heaven, *and my charity to them too*. I can walk in my neighbour's pleasant fields, and see the variety of natural beauties, and delight in all that in which God delights, that is, in wisdom and virtue, in the whole creation, and in God Himself. And he that hath so many causes of joy is very much in love with sorrow and peevishness, if he loses all these pleasures and chooses to sit down on his own little handful of thorns."*

Among the compassionate friends to whom he here alludes was his neighbour, Lord Carbery, of Golden Grove, whose kindness and hospitality were largely shown to him, and were gratefully acknowledged in the dedications prefixed to the 'Holy Living and Dying.' Another and still more valuable friend was the learned and pious John Evelyn, who for many years assisted him in his necessities. Evelyn was drawn to him by the sturdy spirit which induced him even in his retirement to publish an attack on the Puritan divines, whereby he subjected himself to a second short imprisonment. The intimacy which sprang from this untoward circumstance was continued in an affectionate and interesting correspondence, much of which is preserved in Evelyn's 'Memoirs,' and from which we learn

* 'H. L.' ii. 6.

that Evelyn had the highest regard and veneration for Taylor, taking a journey from his country-house to hear him preach whenever he came to London, consulting him on spiritual matters, and speaking of him as his ghostly father.”* Such a friendship, so constant, so confidential, producing such reciprocity of benefits, is a rare and rich blessing; and to those on whom it is bestowed, it may make amends for many a “little handful of thorns.”

When we read in the passage just quoted of his “walking in his neighbour’s pleasant fields,” we are reminded that till within the present century his memory was preserved in Wales by a tradition similar to that which was attached to the names of Bishop Ridley at Cambridge and Addison at Oxford. An avenue in which he was wont to pace up and down, and meditate, was called after him, “Jeremy Taylor’s Walk.”

These few particulars of his life may enable us in some measure to imagine what he was in personal character and outward circumstances at the time when he wrote the ‘Holy Living and Dying.’ It is only needful to add that at the Restoration his services and sufferings in the cause of royalty were not forgotten: after holding for a short time a lectureship at Lisburn, in Ireland, he was appointed in 1661 to the see of Down and Connor; and there, in the midst of his labours, he was taken to his rest in his fifty-fifth year, closing, we may well believe, a holy and exemplary life by a holy and blessed death.

We come now to speak of his book, one of the best products of that time of trouble, when, as he complains in his dedication, “Religion was no longer seen in her

* Evelyn’s ‘Memoirs,’ ii. 101.

appointed places" (for all the offices of the Church had been suppressed), "but was inscribed on the banners of armies; when God was worshipped, not as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, but as the Lord of Hosts."

The book was published in two parts, now commonly bound up together. The purpose of the 'Holy Living' was "to supply to the few good people who still remained a collection of holy precepts, which might make them less feel the want of personal guidance; since they would not always have a prophet at their needs, nor be suffered to go up to the house of the Lord to inquire of the appointed oracles." Seldom does it happen that a book, called forth like this by an occasional want, is found to be a possession for all time.

The 'Holy Living' is founded on the law of Nature or Right Reason, and proceeds on a method suggested by the saying of the Apostle, that "we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."* Accordingly those virtues and duties are presented first which may be evolved from the moral sense or conscience without the aid of Revelation; and afterwards those which are specially enforced (if not newly inculcated) by the Christian religion in the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles. I. Under Sobriety are placed the personal qualities of temperance, chastity, humility, modesty, and contentedness. II. Righteousness includes all duties, whether civil, social, or domestic, which arise out of our relations with other men. III. Godliness, properly so called, the godliness of the Christian, consists of faith, hope, and charity; charity or love toward God disposing us to obey, worship, and praise Him, charity or love toward man showing itself forth in works of mercy and almsgiving for God's sake.

* Tit. ii. 12.

The propriety of this arrangement may, perhaps, be called in question. Would it not have been better, we may ask, at least for the purpose of this book, to have inverted the order of the apostolic precept, and to have begun with godliness, after the example of the General Confession in our Daily Service, in which we pray "that we may hereafter lead a godly, righteous, and sober life"? It might have been expected in a devotional work that every duty and every virtue would be made to rest on the revealed word of God, and that the law of Nature or Reason would be appealed to only as a witness to that supreme authority. Be this as it may, the method which has been adopted by Taylor is neither illogical nor unscriptural; and it has been followed in our own time by an eminent writer on Christian morals, the late Dr. Whewell.*

Another observation is to be made on the general plan of the book. Taylor describes in glowing words the loveliness, the blessedness of virtue; but he has not left us to suppose that his pictures will transfer themselves to our hearts and will there become realities by our fondly gazing and musing upon them. The fruit of the Spirit, he tells us, will not ripen in our bosom without persistent care and watchfulness on our part. He never ceases to represent the Christian life as a spiritual conflict. Side by side with each grace which goes to make up the saintly character, he sets the antagonisms which are opposed to it, and the difficulties which obstruct us in the practice of it; he supplies rules both for exercising the grace and for subduing the contrary sin. Thus, after speaking of the duty of prayer, he prescribes the remedies for that "tediousness of spirit" in prayer and other religious acts which every one of us, I doubt not, has to lament and strive against.

* See Whewell's 'Elements of Morality.'

"It is the fault," he says, "of those who pray without earnestness, who meditate seldom, or without fruit, or sense, or affection; who rarely examine their consciences, and then but sleepily, slightly, without compunction, or hearty purpose, or fruits of amendment."* His care in warning us against this insidious lethargy of the spirit, and his directions for overcoming it, will not suffer by comparison with the tender sympathy and the gentle treatment which St. Francis of Sales has bestowed on the same infirmity under the name of "spiritual dryness."

I say not that Taylor has perfectly worked out his design, or that he has been invariably faithful to the method which he proposed to himself. If, for instance, we desire to meditate with him on the two closely allied virtues of truthfulness and courage, and their opposites, —which are also nearly related,—untruthfulness and cowardice, we find that he has only touched on them incidentally here and there. In a scientific treatise on moral theology, this would be a serious defect; in a devotional work we can readily yield ourselves to the author's train of thought, without inquiring whether all the parts hold together in strict sequence and due proportion.

The 'Holy Dying,' like the 'Holy Living,' was called forth by a special occasion, being intended by the author to minister to the domestic sorrows of his friend and neighbour Lord Carbery. He calls it in his dedication the first entire body of directions for sick and dying people that he remembers to have been published in the Church of England. In the Church of Rome there had been many: but misliking these,

* 'H. L.' iv. 3. It will be seen that this and the preceding paragraphs have reference to the comments on the 'Holy Living

and Dying' made by the Dean of Norwich in Lecture III. (above, pp. 65, 67).

and being almost forced to walk alone, he drew his rules and advices from the fountains of Scripture, and the purest channels of the primitive Church, with such help as he had from his own experience in the cure of souls. And this he did, having scarce any other possibility left him, he says, of doing alms, or exercising that charity by which we shall be judged at doomsday.

Here he is by turns persuasive, tender, and severe.

As we read, we can believe him equally capable of binding up the broken heart of his widowed friend at Golden Grove, and of exercising a righteous sternness, and refusing to give the sacrament to Lord Herbert of Cherbury, unless the dying infidel would recant the opinions which he had published. He aims at no deep philosophy, enters into no subtle mental analysis. He pointedly disclaims all attempt to "please the speculative part of man." He is intensely practical, having this chiefly in view, the nearness of the soul to death and eternity. His object is fourfold: I. To help us in our meditations on the shortness and uncertainty of life; II. To press on us the necessity of making the whole of life a preparation for the hour of death; III. To discourse on the state of sickness, and the temptations, the blessings, the Christian graces which are specially connected with that state; and IV. To assist the clergy in their visitation of the sick.

Very characteristic is the way in which he commences his rules of patience, bidding us "at the first presence of sickness gather up our spirit, and consider that this is what we always looked for, and were certain must one day happen. Therefore we must set our heart firmly on this resolution: I must bear it inevitably, and by God's grace I will bear it nobly." And though he resorts to a somewhat forced similitude, when he compares the man surprised by sickness to the Libyan lion, lashing himself with his tail when first he spies

the huntsman and feels the wound of the Mauritanian spear; yet if his object was to make a lively and lasting impression on the reader, it must be allowed that the ingenious illustration has not been used in vain.

Again, what comfort there is in the reflection, that sickness, though in itself an evil, puts away from us many of the troubles, which cling to us inseparably in health; and that the worst sickness is better than the most pleasant sin. Very needful also and encouraging are the considerations which he urges against unreasonable spiritual fears. And as to the natural fear of death, how well he enlarges on the saying of the Latin poet, which Lord Bacon also had in view in his 'Essay on Death,' "*Pompa mortis magis tenet quam mors ipsa*," "There is more to appal us in the ceremonies attendant upon death than in death itself;" a truth which, if it has long been acknowledged, we are now almost as far from acting upon as even the contemporaries of Seneca, of Bacon, and of Taylor. He who has made the 'Holy Dying' his companion, not on the sick bed only, but long before the "presence of sickness," and in anticipation of it, will have been taught to fear no evil, and to look confidently to the rod and the staff of the Good Shepherd for his support, when the valley of the dark shadow lies before him, and the light shines more and more brightly on the everlasting hills that are beyond.

It is an agreeable feature in this book that the style of it varies considerably with the subject-matter. Where flowers of fancy would be out of place, as in laying down the motive and defining the limits of obedience to human laws,* the style is as concise and terse as that of the 'Codex' itself, which Taylor often quotes. At other times he pleads with the soul in passionate

* 'H. L.' iii. 1.

expostulation, reminding us of the 'Imitatio Christi.' His familiarity with the 'Imitatio' appears from the frequent use he makes of it, often borrowing from it *verbatim*, in the excellent maxims which he published shortly before the 'Holy Living and Dying,' under the title of the 'Via Pacis.'*

But in general we are borne along in this book on a copious and stately stream, often diffuse, not always smooth, but never turbid; free from the pedantic conceits and efforts at verbal wit, which were at that time in favour, and which disfigure the writings of some of our great divines as of Thomas Fuller and Bishop Andrewes.

Taylor brought to this work all his extraordinary powers of illustration. He is never at a loss for quotation, anecdote, allusion, to give freshness to the most trite and obvious truths. His imagery is not often derived, like that of Fuller, from his intercourse with the world, or from the resources of a sportive wit, but chiefly from his stores of ancient learning. Next to the Holy Scriptures, he makes most frequent reference to the classical writers of Greece and Rome; then to the Greek and Latin fathers of the Church. Among the moderns, one or two Italian writers are cited, and only one English author.†

* Compare 'Via Pacis,' with 'Imitatio Christi':

'Via Pacis,' 11,	'Im. Chr.' i.	4, 1
" 12,	" i.	4, 2
" 13,	" i.	4, 2
" 16,	" i.	7, 2
" 20,	" i.	10, 1
" 24,	" i.	12, 1
" 32,	" i.	19, 3
" 35,	" i.	21, 2
" 36,	" i.	21, 3
" 46,	" i.	23, 4

The 'Via Pacis' might with great advantage be appended to future editions of the 'Holy Living,' both as a contrast to it in style

and as a supplement to its contents.

† The references in the 'Holy Living' are approximately as follows: to heathen writers—Greek 116, Latin 84, total 200; Jewish 5; Christian fathers—Greek 14, Latin 41, total 55; Acts of Councils, 2; the 'Codex,' 5; Moderns—Latin 1, French 1, Italian 24, English 0. The references in the 'Holy Dying' appear to be in like proportion, except that one English work, Weaver's 'Funeral Monuments,' is several times referred to.

England already possessed a literature of which she had no cause to be ashamed, had she been conscious of it. But her great writers were not yet recognised as authorities. They awaited the test of time, the judgment of successive generations. The stage had been silenced. Shakspeare was little known; no sayings of his had as yet become familiar in men's mouths, as household words. Throughout the republic of letters the ancients received more attention and more deference than is accorded to them at the present day. It could not be otherwise in an age so little removed from the epoch of the Renaissance: but Taylor has done us good service by giving prominence to the best moral sayings of heathen poets and philosophers, and so making it evident that God never "left Himself without witness" in men's hearts;* that there was a *præparatio evangelica*, a preparation for the Gospel, among Gentiles, as among Jews, before the Gospel came.

And in some degree a frequent reference to heathen writers was rendered appropriate, if not necessary, by the general plan of the work, according to which, as we have already observed,† the rules of morality and good living are deducible from inherent and fundamental principles of human nature, existing independently of special revelation.

It is not to be supposed, however, that because Taylor refers but seldom to the writers of his own country, he was not well acquainted with them. There are in his works many indications to the contrary. An eloquent passage on the fear of death, of which I have just spoken,‡ was probably suggested by a sentence in one of Lord Bacon's essays. A remark made by Fuller in

* Acts xiv. 17; Rom. ii. 153.

† See above, p. 152.

‡ See above, p. 156.

his 'Holy State,' that the Reformers had hitherto been defective in "Case-Divinity," and were beholden to the Romanists for what they knew of it, was manifestly in the mind of Taylor when he wrote the preface to the 'Ductor Dubitantium,' and may even have set him upon supplying the want which it pointed out, by the production of that elaborate and interesting, though somewhat neglected, treatise. And though he quotes none of the English poets, not even Spenser, whose genius was so nearly akin to his own, he shows himself conversant with their works, by his complaint that "they appeared to consider divine things unworthy of their poesy." *

How readily he resorts to ancient authorities, setting them sometimes unduly in the foreground, one or two instances will suffice to show.

He is recommending a yearly retreat from the world for prayer, confession, reflection, renewal of holy vows, and correction of careless ways; and to make more easy this annual introspection of ourselves, he advises that "every night before going to bed the actions of the past day be examined with a particular scrutiny, if there have been any accident, such as long discourse, much business, or much company." He is here pointing out a way by which the apostolic command, that we should judge ourselves, may best be complied with: and for the mode of doing this, for the practice of recalling every night the doings and sayings of the day, he cites the "Golden Verses" of Pythagoras, which if not actually composed by the philosopher whose name they bear, are undoubtedly of heathen origin. "Never yield thyself to sleep," says the heathen sage, "till

* This was said in a letter to Evelyn, A.D. 1656, about the time when Milton was beginning to work upon the sacred epic which he had so long had in contemplation.

thou hast gone over all the doings of the day, and asked thyself, 'In what have I transgressed, what have I done, what good have I left undone?'"* The precept was for ages misunderstood even by the disciples of the Pythagorean philosophy, as a recent French writer has abundantly proved; but it was strictly observed by the pagan emperor Marcus Aurelius; and the Church adopted it and made it her own, with this essential addition, that we must pray God to pardon our sins, and give us grace to amend our lives, for our Saviour Christ's sake. In support of this good practice, familiar to many a humble-minded Christian in every age, Taylor adduces the precept of a heathen philosopher. Nor is he to be blamed for this;

* Μηδ' ὕπνον μαλακοῖσιν ἐπ' ὄμμασι προσδέξασθαι, πρὶν τῶν ἡμερινῶν ἔργων τρίς ἕκαστον ἐπελθεῖν, πῇ παρέβην, τί δ' ἔρεξα, τί μοι δέον οὐκ ἐτελέσθη; See 'H. L.' i. 1, and again, more fully, 'H. D.' ii. 2.

The 'Revue des deux Mondes' of 15 May 1875 has an interesting article by Monsieur Constant Martha, of the Institut, the object of which is to show that this Pythagorean precept was for many ages erroneously supposed to be a direction for improving the memory, by recalling at night all that has passed in the course of the day. M. Martha traces this misapprehension through the writings of Cicero and Diodorus Siculus, of Porphyry and Iamblicus in the third and fourth centuries, and of other commentators on the Pythagorean philosophy, down to and including Fénelon. Meanwhile the precept was rightly understood by the Stoics, e. g. by Seneca, Epictetus, and M. Aurelius, the last of whom strictly enforced it upon himself, and by

the later Platonists, e. g. by Hierocles of Alexandria, in the fifth century. The writer goes on to show that the precept was adopted by the Christian Church, and gives examples of the excess to which this self-examination was carried by the over-scrupulous conscience: he mentions the penitential tablets of the monks, the method used by Franklin for registering his sins, and the observance of this precept as their only rule of life by the French sect of the Theophilanthropists, in the year 5 of the Republic: and he sums up the curious history in these words:—

"Ainsi, par une bizarre fortune, le précepte des 'Vers d'Or,' mal compris pendant des siècles, puis recueilli par les plus grandes doctrines philosophiques, enfin jugé digne de devenir chrétien, parut encore la dernière ressource des candides novateurs, et dans la ruine universelle des cultes fut regardé comme l'unique et solide soutien de la morale publique et privée."

he does well to give heathenism its due: but as a Minister of the Gospel, instructing a Christian people, he would have done well also to make it appear that the practice has the sanction of Christian authority and example.

Again, it may be thought that, in his admiration of the ancients, he almost loses sight for a moment of his office as a Christian teacher, when he refers with seeming approval, and certainly without censure, to the Roman practice of seeking escape from a dishonoured life by a self-inflicted death. "Paulus Æmilius," he says, "did handsomely reprove the cowardice of the king of Macedon, who begged of him for pity's sake and humanity, that having conquered him and taken his kingdom from him, he would be content with that, and not lead him in triumph prisoner to Rome. Æmilius told him he need not be beholden to him for that; *himself might prevent that in spite of him*. But the timorous king durst not die." He goes on to say "Every wise man will easily believe that the tyrant of Sicily (Dionysius) better had perished in the Adriatic than to be wafted to Corinth safely, and there turn schoolmaster." This looks like saying that the ways of God's providence might be ordered for us better than they are. But doubtless he would have seen the impropriety of this remark if he had applied it to his own case. He, like Dionysius, was keeping school, in exile and poverty; but it would never have occurred to him to regret that he had been released from his prison at Cardigan, and that he had not perished in the storm which threatened shipwreck to both Church and State. And as to his momentary aberration, if such it was, on the subject of self-murder, we are fully reassured when we come to his explanation of the decalogue, and find there the simple and emphatic declaration, that the sixth commandment is

broken by him "who hastens *his own* or another's death." *

Some of Taylor's most charming illustrations are derived from Nature. Being at this time almost entirely debarred from the use of books, he had more leisure and probably more inclination for the loving observation of rural sights and sounds: and the works which he composed during his residence in Wales have been thought to be specially rich in natural images. In this book, for example, he compares the passions "which petulantly solicit a man in health" with "the atoms in the sunshine, always dancing, and always busy, and never sitting down, till night draws the veil." He had probably been looking out on the vale in which he dwelt, and on the hills which bounded his view, when he likened the voice of a dying man to "the faint echo of a distant valley," and when in words which may have given a hint to the author of 'Rasselas' he says that to complain of God's providence is as unreasonable as "to find fault with the rich valleys of Thasus, because they are circled with sharp mountains." †

* 'H. D.' iii. 7; iv. 8.

† 'H. D.' iii. 6; ii. 4; 'H. L.' ii. 6; and see Willmott's 'Life of Taylor,' p. 127. The allusion to "the rich valleys of Thasus" is not explained in any of the editions of the 'Holy Living,' but was no doubt suggested by a passage of Plutarch (one of Taylor's favourite authors), who complains of the poet Archilochus for overlooking the fruitful districts and vineyards of Thasos (τὰ καρποφόρα καὶ οἰνόπεδα), and giving the island a bad name because of its rocky and uneven surface (διὰ τὸ τραχὺ καὶ ἀνώμαλον διέβαλε τὴν νῆσον), saying that "it is like an ass's backbone, crowned with savage woods," Ἡδ' ὥστ' ὄνου ῥάχϊς ἔστηκεν ὕλην

ἀγρίας ἐπιστεφής. See Plut. 'De Exil. Archilochus,' Fragm. ix. (ed. Liebel). Mr. Grote ('Hist. Greece,' iv. 34) adopts the description of Archilochus, without noticing Plutarch's comment upon it, which is borne out by the coins of the island, betokening the cultivation of the vine by the device which they bear, the head of Bacchus.

It seems not an extravagant supposition that, by musing on these few words of Taylor, Dr. Johnson, who was a reader and admirer of Taylor's works, may have been led to represent his Abyssinian prince scorning the happy valley and endeavouring to find his way over the sharp mountains by which it was surrounded.

The prayers which follow each chapter of the 'Holy Living and Dying,' intended to help the reader in applying what he has been reading to a devotional use, are sometimes spoken of as the least satisfactory portion of the book. A prayer which is composed for private use should be at once fervent and simple in its language, not diffuse, not argumentative, not rhetorical. Taylor's prayers too often offend in one or other of these respects. They are not always natural in their sentiment, nor simple in their expression. They betray the art with which they have been framed. Yet, with all their faults they have, on the whole, great beauty, freshness, and variety of thought; and the intelligent reader will find it an edifying and a pleasant exercise to modify them in such a way as shall adapt them to his own spiritual necessities.

But we must dwell no longer either on the beauties or the blemishes of this work: enough has been said, if you are led to observe them for yourselves, not in a critical spirit, but so that, according to the saying of St. Paul, "your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent."* It only remains for us now to enforce what has been said already, that the 'Holy Dying' is not for those only whom sickness admonishes to prepare for their latter end. It teaches how to die by teaching how to live. In many respects it is supplementary to the 'Holy Living,' which, if considered by itself, will often be found wanting, where the sister treatise happily abounds. Let us take only one case of this, and then conclude. The subject is repentance. The motives by which this duty is urged on the sinner in the 'Holy Living' are these two—(1) that if he does not repent, he will certainly perish; (2) that if he does

* Phil. i. 9, 10.

repent and lead a godly life, he will be forgiven, he will be saved. We assent to this statement, but not unreservedly, not without a feeling that something is left unsaid which ought to be said, and that a still higher, if not a stronger, motive than the fear of perdition and the hope of salvation remains to be brought forward. And in the 'Holy Dying' we find that higher motive placed in the very front. There he renews, in more solemn terms, his appeal to the guilty conscience; and while he says most truly that sickness is the proper scene for patience and resignation and the passive graces, but is not often a favourable condition for undertaking the work of repentance, because the mind is enfeebled by it as well as the body, yet he presses the sick man not only with the motives which he had urged on the man in health, viz. religious fear and hope, but also with a nobler, because a disinterested motive. The main principle of his repentance is to be "contrition" or "sorrow for sin, arising from the love of God." *

The incentives to this heavenly love, kindled in us by God's love to sinners, are set forth by Taylor in his most persuasive manner: and as we read, we cannot but feel that every word which is here spoken to the sick and the dying may be addressed with equal cogency to those who are likely to live and to have space granted them for true repentance and amendment of life.

The motive of fear, the dread of God's righteous judgments, cannot in the present state of things be dispensed with altogether; though to some of us it is more needful than to others. But how true is the saying of the Apostle that "fear hath torment." Fear, as the dominant motive of the heart, is to be endured only for a season, until hope and love shall be reared to take its place. Hope will spring up quickly, and will

* 'H. L.' iv. 9; 'H. D.' iii. 6, &c.

seem to prevail over fear, yet is not able always to keep the upper hand ; hope is unstable, is easily discouraged, and never is quite free from fear. Only one thing, only perfect love, can entirely and for ever cast out fear and bring in the abundance of peace and joy. And though perfect love is in this life unattainable, yet we may approach to it more and more nearly by the continual lifting up of our heart to God ; and the more nearly perfect we are in love, the more will our fears die away, the holier we shall be, the more at peace within ourselves, the more full of joy.

THE 'THEOLOGIA GERMANICA.'

The 'Theologia Germanica' a representative book; Luther's judgment of it, and Baron Bunsen's; its author unknown; its date the fourteenth century, the age of the Papal Schism, and the age following that of the Scholastics; importance of these considerations to a just estimate of the book and of its mode of treating fundamental questions.—The 'Theologia Germanica' viewed in respect of its definitions of Religion, of Goodness, and of Sin; how far its influence on the spiritual life may be trusted; explanation of the limit beyond which it is unsafe to follow it; description of the class of persons to whom, and of the circumstances under which, its study at the present day is likely to be beneficial.

"My flesh and my heart faileth: But God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever."—PSALM lxxiii. 25.

As we speak of representative men, so also may we speak of representative books. And just as representative men usually present the special characteristics and qualifications of a particular class, so also is it with what we may call representative books. It is the function of representative books to set forth with special distinctness some one special type of mind, or phase of feeling, or class of conviction. The quality, then, which gives such books their value is not so much their genius, or their beauty, or their comprehensiveness, as their simple fidelity to fact, the accuracy and the vividness with which they set forth the state of feeling or the type of mind from which they spring. And when that state of feeling is one which has its roots very deep down in human nature, when it is one

which springs up again and again, which is sure to appear from time to time whenever analogous circumstances shall recur, then, whether large or small, such a book is sure to take its stand as one of the permanent possessions of our human race, and as one of the permanent landmarks of our human character.

The 'Theologia Germanica' is such a book. The 'Theologia Germanica' is one of those few books which no student of the various phases and expressions of the Christian consciousness will leave unstudied. I say the *various* phases, for it is emphatically what I may call a monograph, and selects a single specimen of these phases as its subject. It sets forth one attitude of the Christian soul, and one alone. Here lies its value. Christian truth is many-sided; Christian philosophy includes many aspects of many truths; the Christian soul has its many diverse moods and feelings. If ever we are to grapple with this complex study, we must isolate its portions, and endeavour to work out the diverse effects of the Christian faith on the human character, according as this or that master-truth has taken possession of some great soul—of some soul great enough to receive it, daring enough to act upon it, and powerful enough to become its thorough exponent.

The 'Theologia Germanica' is a contribution towards the carrying out of the idea which I have just expressed. It is manifestly the production of some strong character, of some strong mind and heart—of some mind and heart of singular intensity—a mind which could do what so few minds ever really do, i.e., thoroughly realise to itself the meaning of some master-truth, and then give itself up to that truth with total self-surrender and allegiance. There is consequently a force and a directness about it, a real living intensity of conviction, which enables it to speak as plainly to the human soul, under the changed circumstances of

the nineteenth century, as when it was first written, full five hundred years ago. It was not a new book in Luther's time, but Luther ranked it next the Bible, save only the writings of S. Augustine. In our own day Baron Bunsen would have ranked it higher still—absolutely second only to the Bible itself. It is a strange thought—strange to us who live in an age which imagines that change and progress is the all but inexorable law of the human intellect—it is a strange thought that a little book of five hundred years ago, written by some unknown German, amid the terrible confusions of that wild conflicting period, should still address us with a voice which not the most fastidious modern can call obsolete or antiquated. Stranger still, when you come to read the book, is the thought which next seizes you as you enter within the charmed circle of its religious calm, and you wonder, as you read it, that such a book could have been the utterance of an era of such unbounded tumult. And yet on second thoughts you feel that in this very *contrast* lies the explanation of the book itself; that it was this contrast which gave the book its absolutely unparalleled attraction and force; that it was this contrast which made its ideas take such powerful hold upon the writer, and why, once written, it became the spiritual food of thousands who in that wild age were crying, "Who will show us any good?" The world, the German world especially, of the fourteenth century, was full of violence and cruel habitations—discord everywhere. It was the century of the Papal schism. It was the time of the long interdict when, for five-and-twenty years, sacred rites had been all but suspended throughout the Empire. It was the century of fierce reactions in opinion, and strange fanaticisms in religion; the period of sectaries, compared with whom the wildest that we hear of in our day are

reasonable beings. Wars and pestilences, notably the Black Death, came in to add their portion to the already overflowing cup, and were not unnaturally regarded as the tokens of the wrath of God poured out on an unrighteous world. Where was the torn soul of any who had either minds to think, or hearts to feel, to find peace or calm, support or healing? These are the questions which set us on the right track for understanding the *line* of this remarkable little book; and they do it in two important respects. For first they enable us to understand the strength and intensity with which it clings to its one idea; and then, secondly, they enable us also to understand the essential one-sidedness of its view of religion. It is obvious, then, that a consideration of the outward circumstances of the times, and the special trials which they brought upon any devout soul, must occupy a prominent place in any study of this little book; and the three factors for the solution of its problem may be enumerated thus:—(1) God; (2) the ungodly world; and (3) the "good man," lonely in his goodness, but yet clinging to it with a force and an intensity which no outward evils can shake.

Accordingly, in the 'Theologia Germanica' I behold the good man flying from the utter ungodliness of a hopeless age to take refuge alone with his God. The good man *still* believes in his God, spite of the overflowing wickedness which surrounds him. The good man still believes in religion, spite of the worldliness of prelates, spite of the shamelessness of Popes, spite of the practical denial of it in the lives of its official representatives. The good man, I say, persists, with an almost desperate tenacity, in believing in his God, and in religion; but in spite of all his persistence the questions will force themselves upon him, where is he to find his God? and what *is* religion? Is he to find

his God and his religion in that strange, wild, secular world which goes its way as if unconscious of either—a world where no Divine order stands forth to view, but where on the contrary wild war, and selfish ambition, and reckless misrule seem to work their will unchecked? Is he to find it in a Church which has left the teaching of the Gospel to learn the lessons of the world, and which only shows its superior intellect by its skill in handling worldly politics, or in trading upon the superstitions which it encourages for its own ends?

Ah, sirs, these are questions which men will have to go on asking themselves, under various modifications, and with more or less bitterness, according to circumstances, as long as the world stands. In quiet times we ask them in quiet tones of calm reflection. In times of uttermost confusion, like that of which we speak, men asked them in tones of agony and shrieking: and so the answer was given in tones of corresponding keenness. It is just because the '*Theologia Germanica*' went straight into the heart of the matter and gave its answers and its counsels without technicality, and without circumlocution; it was just because the writer was feeling the questions as matter of instant life and death for his very own soul, and therefore answered them in plain words; it is just for these reasons that it remains a book for all times.

God? I see Him not; where shall I find Him? In the government of the world? But all is confusion and anarchy. In the Church? But all is corruption. Religion? What is it? And what is it for? Is it a reality at all? I say again, in that wild time of rival Popes, of warlike Prince-Bishops, of fanatical sectaries, the intensity with which these questions must have been propounded, surpasses anything which our calmer age experiences. Holy David had once been

in something of the like case when the overflowings of evil had made him afraid, and tempted him to scepticism. But the good man's case in the fourteenth century was worse than David's; for David could go into the House of God, sure that when he went therein he would find One who would convince him how foolish were his doubts. With the good man of the fourteenth century the state of the Church, so far as it was visible upon the surface, was the sorest scandal, the most dangerous stumbling-block of all. The ordinary Christian of that time was almost absolutely stripped of anything external to look to. Surely, surely, it is an example of the intense tenacity of life which there is in the Christian Religion—a tenacity of life which seems to me the highest practical evidence of its divinity—that when these agonizing questions are at their worst, and the soul looks out for answer, and there is none outside to help, then such men as he who wrote the 'Theologia' can open the door of their own souls, can enter into the temple of their own hearts, and there, as in a real Holy of Holies, can find the God whom they seek, and can hear the answers they require. The writer of the 'Theologia' found it so. He found God in his own heart; and finding Him he found all. In the presence of God the other questions were no longer "hard for him;" their answers no longer far to seek. Religion—what is it for? The answer—to make me good. Yes, but what is goodness, and what is sin? My friends, to appreciate the force of the 'Theologia's' answers to these questions, to appreciate the value of their *brevity*, of the way in which they deal with the essence rather than the form, you must remember that it was written just some seventy or eighty years after the completion of the mighty system of scholastic theology,—a system which, with a microscopic minuteness of subdivision

and of subtlety, had dealt with all these questions at gigantic length, and which by this time had been itself still farther overlaid by commentary upon commentary, until, indeed, the outbuildings obscured the shrine.

No man, at least no man who has the smallest knowledge of history and of theology, of the social and intellectual movements of the thirteenth century, and of its great conflict between religion and science, can ever undervalue the labours of those scholastic divines who raised that enduring breastwork to which, humanly speaking, the defence of the faith was due. But the fortifications of one age are often the dangers of another; and the extreme to which the scholastic method had been pushed caused it in many ways to be an illustration of this truth. S. Thomas and his commentators remained as good and as useful as ever for men of leisure and of calm, for students who could spend years in libraries, but what could they do for such as those of whom we speak? The 'Theologia' goes a shorter way to work.

What is religion for?—To make me good.

What is goodness?—Conformity with the will of God, Whom I behold in the temple of my heart.

What is sin?—The having *any will* of my own in place of the will of God.

This, then, is in sum the answer of the 'Theologia Germanica' to those ultimate questionings of the human conscience which some time or other in his life every man who has either a head or a heart is sure to put. The only difference between the German who wrote the 'Theologia' in the fourteenth century and you and me in the nineteenth, is in the intensity with which the circumstances of the times and of our own lives drive us inward for the answer. A mystical theology is the resource—I will add the divinely

vouchsafed resource—of an age when external means of grace and teaching are obscured or overlaid, or hard to come by. And the writer whom we to-day consider forms but one in the long chain of the exponents of mystic piety,—a continuous chain, never altogether intermitted, always running parallel with the whole history of Christendom, but only coming into special prominence at each recurrence of those crises when for the time the world seems to have overcome the Church, when the prophets of the Lord are rare, when there is no open vision, and when the voice of God speaks only in the hushed souls of the faithful few. The 'Theologia Germanica' is a representative book, because it speaks out these answers with a clearness and a force which is equally intelligible to men of all ages and of all countries.

Can men of the nineteenth century need it? I say, yes. Our times are not so bad as those of the fourteenth century; there may not be so much to dishearten a good man; but, though the circumstances of our age are different, there are times in every man's life when no outward answer will avail him anything, when he must see and consult God in his own soul, and feel for the moment lost, swallowed up, a mere nothing before the mighty presence which overshadows him.

It is then that with the writer of the 'Theologia Germanica' we learn the value and the truth of those two great definitions which recur on every page of his book—the definition of goodness and the definition of sin:—of goodness, that it consists in the concurrence of my will with the will of God;—of sin, that it starts into action the moment that my will asserts an independence of the Divine. It is then that with the writer of the 'Theologia,' we feel that as Sin and the Fall consisted in the severance of our will from God's

will, so it needed an Incarnation, a re-uniting of God and Man, by the intervention and power of God, to restore us, I will not merely say to goodness, but to the *possibility* of goodness. It is then that we not merely acknowledge but actually feel that this re-linking together of the *Divine Nature* and the *human Nature* is a necessary preliminary to any restoration of that *rapprochement* between the *Divine Will* and the *human Will*, in which the only possibility of human goodness consists. And feeling this, we feel that we have found that which makes us bow in willing obedience before the central mystery of the Faith, the Incarnation of our Lord, and *then* the Religion of Christ is a reality to us for ever.

So far then, I conceive, we must all go with the writer of the 'Theologia Germanica.' So far, too, I think that a cautious guide of souls may honestly and rightly recommend the book as an aid to faith now in this nineteenth century as well as in the fourteenth. And it is, I consider, a thought of almost unbounded comfort to us, to know that all through the commotions, religious and other, of those wild times, a deep, strong undercurrent of spiritual religion, such as this, was holding its course unseen in the hearts of thousands now with God. Yes, the Church of God can never die, for it is God's. Religion can never perish, because it is true. Foul as were the enormities of those to whom her ministry was committed, they did but drive inward those vital forces to which outward development was refused; and in a thousand secret places of the Church a light and warmth were glowing to which such books as this bear testimony. That such was the case is simply a historic fact; and the fact itself is the best attestation of the power of such teaching. If in such times as those the flame of true religion was preserved alive by such teaching as this,

no one need ask a stronger proof of its force. We may go one step farther and add that the same historic fact also suggests to us the class of cases where such teaching may be useful now. It suggests to us that the 'Theologia Germanica' may have a special work to do for persons whose life lies much among unbelievers, among scoffers, among men whose whole life is of this earth earthy. It suggests to us that it may well be recommended to the thought and study of persons who are, by their circumstances, cut off from the spiritual support of Christian friendship, of church fellowship and church privileges. There is a truth in mysticism. At least I thoroughly believe there is. And so far as we have yet gone with the mysticism of the 'Theologia,' I believe we have not exceeded the limits of that truth.

Where then does the 'Theologia' overstep? It may seem presumptuous to criticise a book which all have concurred so universally to commend: yet I could not honestly have undertaken to lecture on it, were I not to hold myself free to warn against what I consider to be its dangerous one-sidedness, as well as recommend what I consider its spiritual usefulness. Let me try and explain my meaning.

The writer of the 'Theologia,' then, does right in this, that he makes goodness consist in absolute concurrence of our will with God's will. He does right also in this next particular, that such concurrence is beyond our power, and that it can only be effected by the Presence of God within us. All this is right. But when he comes to the question of *how* our will is to be made to concur with God's will, then, as it seems to me, he steps awry. He says, and says truly, that it is only the power and Presence of God within us that can effect it; but in order that the Presence of God *may* do this, he requires of us an abnegation

of self, which appears to be not only practically visionary, but essentially impossible. Let me cite a passage in which he describes those who are led by the Spirit of God. Such a man, he says, is "so possessed by the Spirit of God that he does not know what he doeth or leaveth undone, and hath no power over himself, but the will and Spirit of God has the mastery over him, and works, and does, and leaves undone with him and by him as God would."* And again, that "true obedience consists in a man's being so quit of himself that in all things he should no more seek or regard himself than if he did not exist, and should take as little account of himself as if he were not, and another had done all his works."† In the same spirit he likens a state of perfect obedience to one in which a man has "no other desire than that he may be to the Eternal goodness what his hand is to a man,"‡ and that such a man has "lost the fear of hell and the hope of Heaven."§

I am not one of those who undervalue a generous unselfishness in the service of God. I well know how feeble is that religion, how unworthy of a soul redeemed by Christ, which needs to be spurred on by the coward fear of torment, or scared into energy by the pictures of the region of lost souls. I well know and feel all this. Yet who does not see that in such places as I

* The whole passage runs thus:—

"Now a man who should be in like manner possessed by the Spirit of God, so that he should not know what he doeth or leaveth undone, and have no power over himself, but the Will and Spirit of God should have the mastery over him, and work, and do, and leave undone with him and by him, what and as God would; such a man were one of those of

whom St. Paul saith: 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God,' and they 'are not under the law but under Grace;' and to whom Christ saith: 'for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaketh in you.'"—*Theologia Germanica*, chap. xxii.

† *Ibid.*, chap. xv.

‡ *Ibid.*, heading to chap. x.

§ *Ibid.*

have read our writer has been *over-mastered* by the master thoughts of which he is the exponent, and that in his rapt contemplation of the Godhead he loses sight of the essential characteristics of that humanity which is God's creation. The nature of man is a fact as well as the nature of God. Human nature in all its sympathies, and aspirations, and capacities of hope and fear, in its mysterious individuality as well as its equally mysterious solidarity with other individuals and with higher natures, is real and living, and not one of its capacities can be suppressed or violated without the Man himself being stunted not improved, lowered, and not elevated by the process. God made our nature. God planted these properties in it. They are a divine work therefore. And therefore also whoever would be a safe guide must study, analyse and comprehend, not only the divine nature but our human nature too; and this not merely because it is a fact, but because it is a *divine* fact as well. It is a divine fact in a twofold sense, first because in the first instance it was the work of God, and next because since God Himself has taken it into Himself in the Incarnation, all that is essential in it is now embalmed for ever in the eternal person of the Son. For religion, or any system of religion to attempt to crush out any essential item in the complex being we call man, is not only an offence against us men, but it is also treason against Him in whom the perfection of manhood now exists above. Humanity is not now a thing of this earth only. Its ideal has been realized, and exists on high in the glorified humanity of Christ.

Here is the master error, then, of all mystical theology, and one of which we must plainly warn all whose ardent feelings may lead them to a too indiscriminate use and love of books like this. Rightly does the writer define sin as the assertion of self *versus*

God, the severance of the human will from the divine. Rightly does he define goodness as the concurrence of the two: but *wrongly* when he almost approaches the oriental doctrine of Absorption, as though we, with our individuality and all our powers and faculties, were to be but mingled and dissolved in some mighty stream of divine volition. True, independence of God is the very definition of human sin. To desire it is sin: to seek it is sin: to *attain* it is the very definition of eternal death; for as union with God is the definition of Life, so severance from God is the definition of Death; and it is on this principle that sin and death are almost convertible terms in the spiritual vocabulary. But individuality is not independence; and it is this which, as it seems to me, the writer of the 'Theologia,' in common with so many mystic writers, fails to note. Rightly does he declare that when the human will exercises independence of the Divine, that moment sin is extant. But to crush individuality is not the way to rectify independence. The 'Theologia' makes this mistake. It crushes individuality. No doubt it does so in order to destroy that hated independence of God which is sin. But in so doing it destroys something more than sin, it erases the will that sins, and in so doing it erases also the will which may, when rectified, serve and glorify God as nothing but free will can. Individuality is one thing, and independence of God is another. Individuality may be maintained without running into independence. It is by *rectifying* our individuality first, and then *after* it has been rectified exalting it to the uttermost; it is by exalting your individuality and mine, and making us, not less but more individual, holier, better, purer, more active, more devoted individuals, that God is truly served, and we become what God created us to be.

I rejoice in my individuality, I rejoice in that pre-

rogative of free individual choice, not because I want to please myself in sinful independence of my God, but because that individuality gives me something (poor unit though I be in God's great universe), because that individuality gives me something of my own which I may freely offer to that God who made me, and whom I desire and rejoice to serve. I rejoice in that individuality, because when I speak of God who made me, I speak of One who made me in His image; and as personality is a part of His being, so a personal individuality must be a part of mine, and therein I resemble Him, and in offering Him the service of an individual freedom, I am offering Him that best thing which He has given me. I do not wish for independence,—that were *sin*; but I must never sacrifice my individuality,—that were *suicide*; and a certain subtle, beautiful, and attractive form of spiritual suicide is what a mystical theology, if left to itself, unbalanced by the divinely ordered correctives of active moral choice and energetic service, is ever leading its too trusting votaries. The eagle himself cannot soar upon a single wing, and the human soul cannot rise heavenward save by the divinely ordered combination of spiritual contemplation on the one side, and of moral service on the other.

No good man who serves God strenuously in his home and family, in his work or in his profession, be it directly religious, or what men call secular, will be otherwise than helped by the deep and earnest study of the 'Theologia Germanica.' But once imagine that it represents the whole of religion, so as to let it lead you into the smiling paths of a purely contemplative piety, apart from the balance of healthy energy and outward duty, and it will but nurture a sickly and self-conscious religionism which will end in that very self-absorption and self-contemplation which it professes to annihilate.

FÉNELON'S

'ŒUVRES SPIRITUELLES.'

The interest concerning Fénelon, and admiration of his character and his teaching not confined to his own Communion; the characteristic of his literary style; a sketch of his life; the conditions of religious and philosophical thought during his time.—The subject-matter of the 'Œuvres Spirituelles,' and the personal character of the work; the arguments in proof of the Existence of God in opposition to the philosophical principles of Locke and his followers; Fénelon's view of the principle of religion being vested in the heart; his largeness of sympathy; the three great principles underlying his practical teaching; the cautions needed in studying it; his exalted view of disinterested love, and its exaggeration the ground of his condemnation by the Roman Curia; his absorbing desire after the perfect love of God, with his defects as a logician; his error arising from a mistake as to the nature of the affections, and an extreme desire to expose the worldliness of the age; his view of self-interest, and the caution to be observed as to its exaggeration; the great value of his writings on this subject; his deep and instructive teaching as to the endurance of the cross; mistake in charging him with a dark view of human life; the supposed ground of the charge; instances in detail of his teaching on the several points stated; his views of prayer not tinged with Quietism, as far as the 'Œuvres Spirituelles' is concerned; the large scope of his counsels on this subject, applicable to the less as to the more advanced; a brief account of his Sacramental teaching, illustrated by certain critical instances; the question, how to estimate his 'Œuvres Spirituelles,' answered.

"He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."—
1 JOHN iv. 16.

THERE are characters so true to the genius of Christianity, that although not of the same Communion,

NOTE.—The edition of the 'Œuvres Spirituelles' to which references are made, is the one published in Paris, 1822, 4 vols., small octavo.

and opposed on important points of belief, we yet feel them to be of one heart and one mind with ourselves. It is not, as some, vainly seeking to reconcile the sad divisions of Christendom, would persuade us, that religion and theology are entirely distinct things, the one being of the heart and mind, the other only of the schools; but that there may be so much common ground of faith, and the One Spirit, Who is at work under different modes of representing truth, may so harmonize them, notwithstanding the dogmatic distinctions involved, that a true sympathy may be felt.

To no one in the Roman Communion does this apply more fully than to Fénelon. Channing said of him that, though he "believed in an infallible Church, he listened habitually to the voice of God within him;" and alluding to strongly prejudiced anti-Romanists, added that "such a man is enough to place within the pale of one's charity the whole body to which he belonged."* Indeed, great as the position which Fénelon's genius and character won for him among his own people, yet, through the blight which the condemnation of the Papal Court and the persecution of Louis XIV. cast upon him, it has so happened that the reverence and love felt for him outside his own Communion has seemed to exceed that which has been felt for him within it. The anecdotes recorded of him during the wars of Louis XIV., that the allied

The authorities referred to are 'Histoire de Fénelon,' &c., par Cardinal de Bausset, Pair de France, Membre de l'Académie Française, 3^{me} édition, revue, corrigée et augmentée; and Jervis' 'History of the Church of France from 1516 to the Revolution,' 2 vols. (Murray, Albemarle Street, 1872).

* W. E. Channing, 'View of Fénelon's Character and Writings:' *Christian Examiner*, 1829.

armies ravaging the country spared the lands belonging to his See, out of respect for him ; and how, refusing a military escort, he passed uninterrupted by the troops in his visitations, which the poor of his diocese called "the truce of God,"* when the king became jealous of his persecuted subject's fame,—these touching anecdotes, relieving the horrors of a religious war, foreshadowed the peculiar honour with which the memory and writings of Fénelon have been regarded, even by persons least given to sympathize with Roman Catholic divines.

A passing glimpse may be given at Fénelon as a literary man ; for a literary style is a part of character, and there is a very special grace and beauty in the composition of his works. The qualities which distinguish the French language—its fine power of analysis, its subtle and graphic distinction of sentiment—have never been more perfectly combined with high spiritual thought and intimate knowledge of the human heart, than in his writings. To enter into Fénelon's mind, it is necessary to take into account the course of his life and the currents of thought prevailing in his day. Of high birth and refined education, trained for the priesthood at the College of S. Sulpice at the time when its first fervours of spiritual life were at their height, and afterwards remaining there as a lecturer on the Holy Scriptures ; after that, his talents attracting the attention of Bossuet, who was then at the zenith of his fame, becoming a frequent sharer of the conferences at Issy, where the Scriptures formed a main subject of discussion ; then selected for mission work among the Huguenots, which he refused to carry on aided by dragoons, alone of the missionaries resolved to trust only to moral persuasion ; then for ten years

* 'Histoire,' vol. ii. p. 100.

acting as a director of a convent of nuns, thus gaining intimate experience of the inner life of souls; and then for nearly another term of ten years the preceptor of the Princes of France, during which time he lived in closest intercourse with the Court; the remainder of his days being passed in retirement in his diocese, in the devoted service of all classes, and especially in kindest familiarity with the poor peasants,—such was the outward tenour of his life. There was but one thing wanting to complete his experience—what he himself once said of Pelisson—that “to show all his virtues, he needed only to be unfortunate.”* And perhaps there never was an instance in which a man’s principles and public teaching have been put to a severer test than that of Fénelon, who bore his disgrace at Court—and, far more, his condemnation as a teacher of error—with such meek submission, that he was thought to have gained a triumph in his fall,† and Pope Innocent was generally reported to have said, that “Fénelon erred through excess of the love of God, while Bossuet (his triumphant antagonist) sinned through lack of love of his neighbour.”‡

Fénelon lived during times of very stirring thought, and specially thought calculated to develop and quicken the religion of the heart. The philosophy of Descartes, asserting the great principles of the soul’s innate primary ideas, had broken down the formal technicality into which the scholastic system, in its decline,

* ‘Histoire,’ vol. i. p. 234.

† The messenger bearing the tidings of his condemnation arrived on the morning of the Feast of the Annunciation, as Fénelon was preparing to go to the cathedral where he was to preach on the Festival. He instantly changed his subject, and preached on submission. The congregation, among

whom the tidings had spread, were moved to tears. The Pope, immediately after receiving his submission, sent Fénelon his benediction, and all the Cardinals assurances of their esteem, respect and veneration. (‘Histoire,’ vol. ii. p. 283, &c.)

‡ Histoire, vol. ii. p. 220, note.

had sunk. The Jansenist controversy, dealing so earnestly with the doctrines of grace, had awakened the Evangelical side of Divine truth, which had been obscured by the excessive dogmatism of Roman theology; and the controversy, though lulled for a time, still affected all religious questions, and even the politics of the day. The mystical teaching also had then grown to its height, in its wilder forms propagated from Spain, in milder forms spreading through France in some degree under the great name of S. Francis de Sales; and mysticism, in its purity, is of the very essence of heart religion, being grounded on the secret converse of the soul with God. There were also at the time thoughts stirring as to constitutional freedom and true human fellowship, though against the prevailing belief and practice, but which, in his 'Telemachus,' Fénelon developed, and which gave to that book such a remarkable and extensive popularity. All these conspiring elements of thought,* agitating the time, were doubtless at work in Fénelon's mind; and, whatever he may have assimilated congenial to himself, was held through a pure love and a child-like enthusiasm for all truth, in harmony with the faith to which he adhered with a profound submission, so that, as Channing said of him, "Though a" (Roman) "Catholic, he was essentially free."†

It is important to remark that no part of the

* Descartes, born 1596, died 1650.

Malebranche, born 1638, died 1715.

Molinos' 'Spiritual Guide' was published in Spanish in 1673. During the same year appeared an Italian translation, which passed through more than twenty editions in six years.

Jansen was born in 1585 and

died in 1637. His 'Augustinus' was published in 1640, and Arnauld's book in 1641. The controversy was quieted by Clement IX. in 1667, but broke out again after the year 1700, and Port Royal was finally suppressed in 1709.

Fénelon was born in 1651, and died in 1715.

† W. E. Channing, *ut supra*.

'Œuvres Spirituelles' was written or ever intended for publication. This fact marks their reality, and explains their peculiarly personal character. It was only after Fénelon's death that they were collected together. Yet there is a completeness in their arrangement; the earlier part treating on matters of faith, the latter on details of practice. The treatise on the Existence of God, with which the work opens, was composed for his pupil, the Duke of Burgundy; the treatises which follow on the faith and worship of God, the immortality of the soul, freewill, &c., were written in an effort to convert the infidel Duke of Orleans; the remainder of the collection, completing the four volumes, is made up mainly of papers and letters of private counsel and advice. Even the most abstruse parts are characterized by a very remarkable union of sentiment and reasoning, and show the rich exuberance of a mind greatly attracted to metaphysics, yet with a constant action of self-constraint accommodating the expression of his thoughts to simple minds. The motto chosen as the text is the truest representation of the sphere of thought in which Fénelon elaborated his ideas, as, in love to God and man, he endeavoured to clothe them in most persuasive and attractive form. For his mind dwelt in a love which was continually moving him to embrace at once the "deep things" of God, and the needs of man.

Fénelon proved the existence of God by conclusions drawn partly from the human mind, partly from nature. While in England at the time Locke and his followers* were teaching that the mind of man is mere blank paper on which ideas are formed only through the agency of the senses, and consequently

* Locke was born in 1632, and died in 1703. Hume was born in 1711, and died in 1776.

man's knowledge was declared to be only of phenomena, which were soon to be proved illusory, this Sense philosophy preparing the way for the cold scepticism of Hume, — during this time Fénelon had laid firm hold of the great principle of innate ideas, and showed how irresistibly and incontrovertibly out of man's own consciousness was to be evolved the knowledge of the infinite God. No one has ever spoken more lucidly or more eloquently of the "Sovereign Master-mind," informing, directing the human reason, implanting in it the ideas of infinity, of unity, of perfection, of the unchangeable rule of right of the laws of conscience. "One cannot say," he remarks, "that man gives to himself those thoughts which he had not; one can still less say that he receives them from other men, for it is certain he neither admits them, nor can admit anything from without, without finding it also within the depths of his own being, or consulting within himself the dictates of his reason, to see whether what another says conflicts with it or not. There is, then, an interior school where man receives what he can neither give himself, nor receive from other men who live in similar dependence with himself."* In a very beautiful passage, after unfolding his proof of the idea of God within the soul, he exclaims: "Whence comes to me this marvellous representation of the Infinite? It is in me; it is more than myself; it appears to me to be everything and myself nothing. I cannot efface it, nor obscure it, nor diminish it, nor contradict it; it is in me. I have not put it there; I found it there; I found it there, only because it *was* there before I sought it. It remains there unchangeable, even when I think not of it, or when I think of other things; I find it whenever I search; it presents itself when

* 'De l'Existence de Dieu,' vol. i. ch. iii. p. 98.

I seek not for it; it depends not on me, it is I that depend on it; if I stray, it calls me back; it corrects me; it reforms my judgment; though I question it, I cannot doubt it, nor judge it; it judges me; it reproves me." And again: "I have found Him, when I perceive that there is necessarily in nature a Being Who is of Himself, and therefore infinitely perfect. I perceive that I am not that Being, because I am infinitely beneath the Infinite Perfection. I perceive that He is external to myself, and that I am of Him. Whatever limited perfection presents itself to me, I hesitate not; the limitation at once makes me reject it, and I say to it in my heart, 'Thou art not my God; thou art not my Infinitely Perfect One.' Such I conceive Him, and because I conceive Him, He is. The astonishing and incomprehensible marvel is that I, feeble, limited, defective, can conceive Him. He must be not merely the object of my thought, but, more than this, the cause of my thought; for He it is that makes me to be, and exalts me, the finite, to conceive the Infinite." And thus he closes this sublime passage:—"Behold the prodigy I always bear within myself! I am myself a prodigy. Being nothing, at least nothing but a borrowed being, bounded, transient, I hold the Infinite and the Unchangeable, Which I conceive; by that I comprehend myself. I embrace all, and I am nothing; I am a nothing, who yet embrace the Infinite; words fail me in marvelling at myself, and despising all I am. O God! O Being of all beings! O Being before Whom I am as though I were not! Thou revealest Thyself to me, and nothing that is not Thyself can resemble Thee. I see Thee; it is Thyself; a ray from Thy Countenance reassures my heart in waiting for the full noonday of truth."*

* 'De l'Existence de Dieu,' Part ii. ch. ii. vol. i. pp. 181, 185.

Very beautifully, too, and simply does he develop the proof of the being of God from nature, and specially from the framework of our own nature, so "fearfully and wonderfully made."

It is well also to add to these samples of his mode of reasoning on these high themes a brief insight into his views of the extent of the workings of the grace of God. "I believe," he says, "with S. Augustine, that God gives to every man a primary germ of grace, intimate and secret, which mixes imperceptibly with the reason, and which prepares him to advance, little by little, from reason to faith. God mingles the beginnings of this supernatural gift with the gifts of nature," so that "every man, by means of his reason, aided by the attraction of this primary grace, may, in fact, have already in himself the commencement of the worship which is true religion, or the groundwork of Christianity."*

It was in close accord with these large-hearted and simple, but profound, views of life and of the love of God, that Fénelon developed the great principle that religion is centred in the heart; that not merely outward worship, but also all outward acts, are but the expressions and symbols of what is within. In urging this, while yet he pleads for the necessity of outward religion, he once exclaims: "O God, what am I? I know not, so insignificant I am. But I think and I will, and that is all I have to give to Him Who made me. He has placed in me my thought and my will. I owe Him, then, all that I have of thought and will. Every moment He gives me all. Every moment I owe Him all without reserve. My relation to Him follows my nature. My nature is to think and to will; my

* 'Lettre sur les moyens donnés aux hommes pour arriver à la vraie religion,' pp. 338-357.

relation then is of thought and will. My relation of thought is to know God, the Sovereign Truth; my relation of will is to love God, the Sovereign Goodness. But what is to love, but to will His Will? He has no need of me, nor of the vile things I possess. While I think to possess them they are already His; I cannot give them to Him. What can I, then? That which He puts in my own power. I can will all He wills, and prefer His will to all that I call my interests. Behold my spiritual relations to God, conformable to my nature! Behold the end of my creation! behold the love of God! behold the worship in spirit and in truth which He demands of His creatures; behold what we call religion! Incense the most exquisite, ceremonies the most majestic, temples the most august, assemblies the most solemn, anthems the most sublime, melody the most affecting, ornaments the most precious, an exterior the most grave and modest of the ministrants of the altar, are but outward and material signs of the worship wholly interior, which is the conformity of my will with the Will of God. Behold the entire man! he is but a being in relation to God, he is nothing but for that; he sinks into nothingness when he falls from this essential order.”*

These extracts may serve to give some indication of the fundamental principles which Fénelon develops in the first volume of the 'Œuvres Spirituelles.' The greater part of the second volume is occupied with subjects more specially devotional, some of them peculiarly applying to Roman uses. Of the breadth and largeness of love in which he treats such subjects, it may be enough to give one instance specially interesting at a time when the desire for unity has been so greatly quickened among us as in other parts

* 'Lettre sur le culte intérieur et extérieur,' vol. i. p. 409.

of Christendom. In a letter on the subject of the Church, he says, "Oh! how blessed were it to see 'all goods in common,' both of the mind and of the body, and that every one no longer regarded his thought, his opinions, his science, his light, his virtues, his noble sentiments, as his own. It is thus that the Saints in heaven have all in God, with nothing for themselves alone. Theirs is a beatitude infinite and common to all, of which the ebb and flow cause the abundance and the satiety of all the blessed; each receiving his measure, each giving out all he has received. If men here below entered into this poverty of spirit, and this community of spiritual gifts, we should see all disputes and all schisms come to an end; we cannot reform the Church except by thus reforming ourselves; then all would have but one only spirit; the spirit of love and of truth would be the soul of the members of the body of the Church, and would reunite them in closest bonds. It would be a commencement of the new creation; of the paradise reserved for the world to come."*

The more practical part of the '*Œuvres Spirituelles*,' which is the best known, is contained in the third and fourth volumes, and consists of letters of private counsel to various persons, their value being greatly enhanced by their variety; including not merely many in ordinary life, but extremes, such as inmates of convents and officers of the Court. Three great principles pervade this practical teaching: 1stly, love of God, by which he understands always the having the same will with God, and thus including the love of man; 2ndly, the crucifixion of self; and, 3rdly, the endurance of the cross. These may be said to be the centres, around which all minor injunctions and warnings group themselves.

* Vol. ii. lettre ii. '*Sur l'Eglise*.'

In considering these principles in detail, two cautions need to be observed. One relates to what may be called Fénelon's watchword, pure disinterested love. He understood by the term such love as divests itself of all sense of personal interest, even of the desire of one's own happiness. Fénelon was led astray by a mistaken view of what constituted spiritual-mindedness, quickened as it would seem by his ardent wish to raise the standard of his age—to imagine what is inconsistent with the present laws regulating our nature. As he himself explains, he was moved by a reaction of indignation against the selfish life to which he had so long been a witness in the Paris of that day, the low tone of teaching that prevailed, the cautious, interested motives appealed to, and the disparagement of all high aims.* Under these impulses he aspired after a kind of disinterestedness which ignores the idea of one's own beatitude, a degree of unselfconsciousness inconsistent with our present state, though it may be prophetically anticipative of what will be hereafter,—as Channing witnesses of him, that “he wrote from his own mind, and seldom has a purer mind tabernacled in human flesh.”† Fénelon thus laid himself open to the charge which the keen-sighted Bossuet drove home with all his trenchant force, and which he explained in an assembly of the French clergy, when he showed that Fénelon's “pure love was opposed to the essence of love, which always desires the enjoyment of its object, as well as to the nature of man, who necessarily desires happiness.”‡ It was, in fact, a mistake as to the nature

* See Fénelon's letter to M. de Beauvilliers, Aug. 3, 1697, quoted in Bausset's 'Histoire,' vol. i. p. 135.

† W. E. Channing, *ut supra*.

‡ Lequeux, 'Manuale Compendium Doctrinæ Moralis, de Virtu-

tibus. Dissertatio secunda.' Sec. 231.

S. Bernard had weighed the question, and thus answers it: “Nescio si a quoquam homine quartus (gradus) in hac vitâ perfectè apprehenditur, ut se scilicet

of our affections, as the great Leibnitz* at the time explained, and as our own Butler afterwards more fully set forth, it being clear, as a law of our nature, that our affections are moved by their proper objects and in proportion to the attractiveness of those objects; that many emotions, such as gratitude, desire, hope, delight in the Divine excellences, necessarily conduce to the love of God, and can in no true sense be termed self-interested, because the very idea of an affection necessarily implies "resting in its object as an end;" † that what in fact constitutes true as contrasted with

diligathom tantum propter Deum. Asserant hoc si qui experti sunt; mihi fateor impossibile videtur." (*'Dediligendo Deo,'* xv. and Ep. 11, &c.) And again, "Nec enim sine præmio diligitur Deus, etsi absque præmii intuitu diligendus sit. Verus amor se ipso contentus est. Habet præmium, sed id quod amatur." (*Ibid.* vii. 17.)

* Leibnitz, writing to Burnet, says, "Par cette définition on peut résoudre cette grande question, comment l'amour véritable peut être désintéressé, quoique cependant il soit vrai que nous ne faisons rien que pour notre bien; c'est que toutes ces choses que nous désirons par elles-mêmes et sans aucune vue d'intérêt sont d'une nature à nous donner du plaisir par leurs excellentes qualités, de sorte que la félicité de l'objet aimé entre dans la nôtre." Quoted in Bausset's *'Histoire,'* vol. ii. Appendix, p. 375.

† Bishop Butler in his preface to his *'Sermon on the Love of God,'* published in 1720, says: "The question a few years ago disputed in France as to the love of God, then called enthusiasm, is fully determined by the very nature of affection—the idea itself neces-

sarily implies resting in its object as an end." And, again, in his *'Sermon on the Love of God:'* "The question whether we ought to love God for His sake or our own, being a mere mistake in language; the real question which this is mistaken for, will, I suppose, be answered by observing our present dependence on Him and future expectations from Him ought to have a natural tendency to beget in us greater love towards Him than the same goodness exercised towards others. Every affection is moved in proportion to the sense we have of the object of it; we cannot but have a more lively sense of goodness when exercised towards ourselves than when exercised towards others."

Again, "Almighty God is the natural object of the several affections of love, reverence, fear, desire of approbation."

It should be observed that the condemnation passed on Fénelon was in reference to his *'Maximes,'* a treatise not included in the *'Œuvres Spirituelles.'* The principles condemned only appear incidentally in the *'Œuvres Spirituelles.'*

imperfect love is, not the extermination of desire, but the triumph of the higher over the lower affections.

There is, therefore, an error in Fénelon's teaching, inasmuch as he fails to set forth, as he might otherwise have so beautifully done, the free spring of hope, the delight in the attainment of virtue, the joy in the sense of possession, the energy of growing desires, the conscious joy of being loved, and the support which these impulses necessarily give to the attainment of the love of God. His fault lay in not taking sufficient account of these motive powers of the soul; that is to say, in not showing their own free development after their own laws, their own inherent energies. He feared the interestedness of the motive, although what seemed self-interest might be only the action of an impulse seeking its own proper end. Yet it is not that Fénelon failed to set forth the power of the objects which move the soul to love God. For nothing can surpass the fervid eloquence with which he descants on the Divine mercies and excellences, and the urgent call they make on us to rise to the higher enjoyments of intimate communion with God. "That," he says, in one place, "which raises me and which softens me, is that Thou art the God of my heart, that Thou hast made there all that Thou hast willed. When I am good, it is Thou hast made me good. Not only dost Thou turn my heart as Thou pleasest, but more than this, Thou givest me a heart like Thine own. It is Thou Who lovest Thyself in me; it is Thou Who dost animate my soul, as my soul animates my body; Thou art more intimately present to me than I am to myself; this I [*'moi'*], to which I am so sensitive, and have so much loved, ought to be a stranger to me in comparison with Thee; it is Thou who hast given it to me; without Thee it would be nothing; behold why Thou wilt that I should love Thee more than

myself. O Power incomprehensible of my Creator! O right of the Creator over the creature, which the creature will never sufficiently comprehend! O prodigy of love, which God alone can cause to be! God wills to be nearer to me by this pure love than I am to myself; He wills that I should pass beyond these bounds of self, to sacrifice it without return, to restore it whole and unconditionally to the Creator, of Whom I hold it. That which I am should be far less dear to me than He by Whom I exist. He has made me for Himself, that I should love Him, should will what He wills—not love myself in seeking my own will.”*

Nor does he fail to express the active power of love, as in a fine passage where he contrasts love with resignation: “It is only true and pure love which loves to suffer, because it is only true and pure love which abandons itself. Resignation causes to suffer, but there is in it something which suffers in suffering, and which resists. Resignation which gives nothing to God except by measure, and with reflection on self, wills truly to suffer, but it fears for itself in suffering. To speak properly, one is as two persons in resignation; the one relieves the other, and watches over it to hinder its revolt. In pure love, on the contrary, the soul nourishes itself in the silence of the cross, and of union with Jesus Christ crucified, without any return of sensibility over its suffering. There is but a will single, simple, which leaves God to see it as it is, without seeking to see itself. It speaks not: it has but to suffer. Love sufficiently makes itself understood without word or thought. It does the one thing it has to do, which is not to will, even when all consolation is gone. A will satisfied in the Will of God,

* ‘On the Necessity of Knowing and Loving God,’ vol. iii. pp. 12, 13.

while all else is taken away, is the purest of all loves."*

Fénelon, in his jealousy for the honour of God, was unwilling to attribute any value to natural impulses, lest they should detract from the entireness of the love and self-surrender which God claims of His creatures; but though his fervent pleadings call for a self-annihilation which we cannot reconcile with our present nature, they may serve to witness against the constant downward tendency of less ardent minds.

This subject is so important in considering where Fénelon fails us as a guide in the formation of the spiritual life, as well as constituting such a critical turning-point in his own history, that I venture to add a few further remarks upon it. It was the criticism of Chancellor d'Aguessau, that, with all his genius and eloquence, Fénelon was "wanting as a logician and in precision of thought, and that his mind was disproportionately disposed to be imaginative and transcendental."† To such a mind there is a peculiar fascination in the idea of a perfect self-abandonment, an utter rejection of all personal considerations under an overwhelming sense of the absolute will of God; and such an abandonment, even to one's own uttermost loss, if so God might be the more glorified, is true to the aspirations of the saintly life, at least in certain states, such as S. Paul exemplifies, when in love for his "brethren in the flesh," "that they might be saved," he declared that he could wish himself "accursed from Christ."‡ But the exaggeration to which Fénelon lent himself was in regarding this condition as a habit, a permanent state, so that, as he conceived, any mixture of personal motive lowered the

* Vol. iii. p. 265.

† Jerviss' 'Gallican Church,' vol. ii. p. 105.

‡ Rom. ix. 3; x. 1.

condition of the soul to a secondary grade of spirituality. On the other hand, there is the greatest possible need of guarding oneself against a mercenary religion—the serving God merely for His benefits, the regarding His gifts more than Himself, and being at peace only when His consolations are felt, the being stirred to love and desire God only by the contemplation of one's own happiness in Him, thus taking merely the standard of the Patriarch Jacob: “If Thou wilt be with me, and wilt keep me in the way that I go, and wilt give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God” *—rather than that of Abraham, who “went out, not knowing whither he went;” † or as Moses, who endured simply “as seeing Him Who is invisible.” ‡ The truth lies in the due proportion being kept between the natural instincts and desires which, as inextinguishable parts of our nature, must always underlie our higher aspirations after God, and a pure faith embracing God in Himself alone, such as was exemplified in the old Patriarchs who, “having received the promises, and having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them,” § yet soared above all thoughts of resting in them, and lived in the yet higher atmosphere of living trust, leaving it to God to order their lives and fulfil His promises as He willed. We follow these high examples while we cherish all true acts of hope and desire, all true longings after our heavenly inheritance, and all graces which elevate us above things of time and sense, and yet aspire higher still to lose ourselves and all that is or may be ours in the pure contemplation of the infinite perfec-

* Gen. xxviii. 20.† Heb. xi. 8.
§ Ibid. 13.

‡ Ibid. 27.

tions of the Author and Giver of all His highest blessings. We cannot conceive a Christian character without the full energies of hope, heavenly desire, and delight in the enjoyment of God, and yet it would lower our idea of such a character to suppose that its mainstay were upon any object short of God Himself, or any motive less than the desire for Him alone to be glorified.

The second caution to be observed is as to Fénelon's view of self-love. This question has a close affinity with the one we have just considered, but is sufficiently distinct to need a separate treatment. Fénelon resolved all the natural impulses of the soul into self-love, and failed to draw the distinction between a pure instinctive impulse, and its perversion to a wrong end. In his ardent aim to overcome the self-partiality of our fallen nature, he does not recognize the truth of the impulses which are the necessary stimulants to action. He at least so explains our duty as to show, that we are not only to mortify "the lusts and passions which war against the soul," but also the faculties themselves. He calls on us to subdue the "moi," the very self; or, as he expresses it, to "disappropriate oneself of oneself," as well as of the evil into which oneself has fallen. There is the same mistake in this case, as already pointed out in reference to the love of God: the want of appreciating the law which constitutes our motive powers to act each after its own kind; that, like bodily hunger and thirst, so domestic affection, benevolence, sympathy the sense of justice, &c., are formed in us to act for their own ends, and that the wrong is not in their acting as they are moved, but in their acting against the will of God, or with self-partial aims. The fault here, as before, lies in omitting to allow for the differ-

ence between the true and the perverted impulse ; in the consequent disparagement of the various energies which, when purified, are intended in their ordered play to be the ceaseless springs of generous, earnest and holy activity. For our nature in its perfect state is intended to be the balance of many great forces acting in mutual correspondence under an overruling power, like the movements of the great deep composed of its many tides and currents under the law of gravity ; and these several forces in our nature are true when they are elicited by their respective attractions, and directed to their intended ends, under the Will of God ; but not as identical with this Will, nor resolvable into It.

But, allowing for this defective view formed in zeal for the entire sanctification of our nature, perhaps the chief value of Fénelon's teaching in this portion of his work lies in his powerful and unsparing warnings against the secret self-partiality, to which we owe the chief guilt and misery of our present state. To distinguish between the pure actings of self-energy as an essential part of our nature, and its self-partial indulgences, is one of the most difficult of all the problems of our inner life ; but there is, I think, no book which more thoroughly and more searchingly goes to the very root of the all-pervading evil, and tracks out its windings, than these writings of Fénelon. Understand him to mean by "the sacrifice of ourselves," the sacrifice of inclination to the least suggestion of duty ; by "forgetting ourselves," the not allowing aught in us, or of our own, to minister to pride ; by the "dying to ourselves," the progress of rising to a pure development of our truer selves in "the life of Jesus becoming manifest in our mortal bodies,"—and with this caution no study can be more helpful in exposing our most secret sins of vanity and self-exalta-

tion, of sensitiveness and ungenerousness. He casts the light of his searching scrutiny, by a thorough vivisection, on parts where the evil lurks least suspected: as, e.g., the failing to rejoice in another's good or another's sanctification as in our own; the annoyance at a fault, being often worse than the fault itself; the dislike of what is moderate and the tendency to be extreme; the scruples, so often a mere anxiety as to satisfaction with oneself; the austerities, often a very refinement of self-love; the restless reflections in justification of what we have done; what he calls "a religion of ceremony," as opposed to a simple religion according to one's state; the impatience at others' faults or defects; the unsparing censure of others' self-love. And with such searching exposures of a corrupted self, we find the simplest common sense and thorough practical truth as to the correction of our faults and the mortification of oneself: as, e.g., "that nothing is more false than that one ought always to choose what most mortifies oneself;" that "health, temperament, reputation, worldly affairs, are to be considered;" that "one not faithful to the mortifications of Providence is to be suspected as to any other self-chosen mortifications;" "that an easy manner, accommodating oneself to circumstances, and even to the amusements common to one's state (he is addressing a courtier), to make piety acceptable," is a part of holiness; that "God uses our defects to deliver us from self-esteem before delivering us from the defects themselves;" that "seeking friendships is often but another form of self-love;" and that "the cravings of self-love are such that infiniteness would not satisfy them."

Closely connected with the ceaseless watch that Fénelon would lead us to keep over the least promptings or refinements of self-pleasing, is his very solemn

teaching as to the endurance of crosses, which he represents as the great means of correcting this false self-love. It has been said that Fénelon takes a dark view of life,* and the writer has ascribed the tendency to his familiarity with the vices of the Parisian world. But no man was ever tenderer, or more pitying, in dealing with others' sins; none more ready to discern the possibility of leading a saintly life, even under the conditions of a debased Court, than was Fénelon; and he was no misanthrope, but rather a very generous and genial spirit, such as sees the brightest side equally as his pure discernment would see the darker sides of life; and the firm, warm attachment of his princely pupils and his old court friends marks his true humanity, equally as their reverence for him marks his acknowledged sanctity. But what is meant is due, probably, to the view which Fénelon took of self-crucifixion. To be urged to aim always, as a necessity of perfect sanctification, at the suppression of all that is oneself, and not merely of the sin and the partiality attaching to oneself, is calculated to create a vague haunting sense of a death to be undergone, against which, notwithstanding, the natural instincts revolt, and thus to depress the mind by an anxious feeling of responsibility as to what is yet felt to be impossible. This exaggerated view of the suffering to be undergone, appears, e.g., in his saying, that "When there is no more need of suffering there is no more need to live, as the sick when cured are discharged from an hospital."† Such a description fails to recognize the recovered powers which have their appointed scope to be developed, and in the true development of which our nature rises and exults, and which in thus rising casts off so much of the clinging evil, as the swelling

* W. E. Channing, *ut supra*.

† Vol. iii. p. 191.

bud of spring-time discharges the husk of the departed year. And none ever showed more truly than Fénelon himself the powers of true life which had become in him a second nature. But allowing for this excess in the view of what is needed to be crucified in us, it is most surely true of us, as it was of our Lord, that we are to be "made perfect through suffering;" and it is never to be forgotten, as Fénelon beautifully observes, that "piety without a cross is a piety merely in idea." Whatever allowance has to be made for certain passages as impressing the mind with a needless sense of depression, one cannot overrate the extreme value of the frequent fervent appeals to the acceptance of this austerer side of the life of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," which he continually urges as necessary for the subdual of the corrupt self within us; or the power with which they come home, and are calculated to sustain and elevate those who are called to "suffer with" Christ as they hope to "reign with Him." He speaks, what all must acknowledge to be a needful lesson, of the state of heart content each moment of life with the sole will of God, not seeking support in looking to the future, or looking forward with secret inquietude; and again of pure, naked faith in one willing to be stripped of all that consoles and soothes nature, and bearing the trial even unto death calmly as practising daily virtue, and counting nothing what one bears, only caring to abide faithful.* Most truly also does he speak of "crosses of gold or jewels which dazzle afar off, but are not less crucifying than more despised ones;" "of worldly greatness adding fresh forms of the cross and hindering the possibility of taking consolations which are possible in less favoured states;"† again, of our being here in one or other

* Vol. ii. pp. 10, 11.

† Vol. iii. pp. 2, 3, and 5.

form, "to suffer, to die, to sacrifice, to bear life without resource, that, as the least mortified part in the living flesh causes one to suffer acute pains, so the least remains of the old life in the dying soul causes often dreadful trial;" of "oneself being one's greatest cross," and of "the common mutual cross formed of one's own and of others' infirmities ceaselessly acting and reacting."* Of such and other varied forms of self-surrender under the pressure of the cross, none has ever written more helpfully or more persuasively, or with profounder truth and force. At the same time, the same truthful and real common sense before pointed out, as characterizing Fénelon, marks his teaching here, as where he says, that "a mortification of a simple kind consisting in fidelity to some cross imposed by Providence is better than any we can seek for ourselves;" that one aggravates one's own crucifixion by a "kind of bargaining with God, wishing to set bounds and to see the end of a trial, such reluctance hindering the effect, and causing the work of the cross to be ever recommencing;"† that, again, "mere weakness and a regime are a true penance;"‡ that, as to all austerities, regard ought to be had to the attraction, worldly state, needs, temperament, &c.

But enough, I trust, has been said to show the main features of Fénelon's teaching on the three points which were specified as more distinctly prominent in the practical part of the '*Œuvres Spirituelles*.'

Some remarks may be added on a fourth point, which is of no less importance than those already considered. If Fénelon erred, as has been shown, through an undue inclination to what is known as Semi-quietism

* Vol. iv. p. 12.

† Vol. iv. p. 397.

‡ Vol. iii. p. 8.

in the matter of disinterested love, this tendency does not appear in the 'Œuvres Spirituelles' on the subject of prayer, though the Quietists in general were characterized by peculiar views on this subject also.* Nothing could be more simple or more practical than what he says in some of his letters on prayer. He represents the ceaseless continuance of prayer as depending on these truths,—that pure love and prayer are identical, and that involuntary distractions interrupt it not, because love is in the will, and distractions are as though they were not, if the will rejects them. Again, he beautifully describes the state of the soul in those moments of rapt prayer, when God acts of Himself alone, and prevents the soul by the strong attractions of His grace, holding the soul in silence to hear His secret communications, its own action seeming to cease, yet only seeming, because all the while it is in correspondence with His grace, and this in a wonderful familiarity with God, yet without losing reverence or filial fear. But while thus expressing the profoundest views of continued peaceful communion with God, he urges the need of care in not allowing the body to suffer from loss of proper rest or nourishment through what he calls the "avarice of prayer;" and he also shows that the very spirit of prayer requires one to cease from prayer to follow the orderings of Providence, and that, when such calls for action arrive, to be anxious about the times of prayer is a real imperfection; that one should never fail in fulfilment of duty to satisfy an attraction of sweetness in prayer; and, again, he bids us guard against possible delusion in silent or rapt prayer, speaking of the need of cherishing solid truths for its groundwork, and

* It is not meant that he did not lay himself open to such a charge in his 'Maximes.'

having recourse to common rules so as to judge the tree by its fruits.

And with these counsels for the more advanced, he mingles directions to encourage and sustain the feeblest and most desponding, saying that reading should be interspersed with prayer; that one should follow attractions as they are felt whether for oral or mental prayer; that both prayer and Holy Communion alike may be without pleasure or fervour, and yet be most real, and perhaps the more profitable, because of the pure intention sustained under the trial; that prayer may need to be a penance before it becomes a nourishment; that feelings depend not on oneself, but only the will is in one's own power; and that even this may fail, because the spiritual exercise exhausts the frame and produces lassitude, and that lassitude is a permissible cause for the discontinuance of prayer; or if yet deeper trials are experienced, when the soul has to learn what he calls "the darkness of pure faith," losing all sense of support from nature, yet if it can then rest content with simple dependence on the pure will of God, there may still be truest inward blessing.*

Our view of Fénelon's teaching in the '*Œuvres Spirituelles*' will not, however, be complete unless we note what the few closing letters in the fourth volume express as to his views on the Sacraments. Such a man as I have endeavoured to describe could not be extreme. His keen spiritual discernment, his reality, his vast and varied experience, his tender, gentle temperament, would be incompatible with such a supposition. What he says on the vexed question of Confession is in accordance with these remarks. While

* See especially Letters lxi.-ii. vol. iii.

he speaks of it as a Divine institution, he expressly explains that it is a remedial ordinance, and thus distinguished from Holy Communion, which is the food of life; that while the need of Confession would continue, because the liability to sin continues, yet the aim should be to lessen the need; that there is danger lest it become a mere formal habit, a self-deceiving, a mere relief of the conscience without any real amendment, and even a gratification of self-love in the frequent speaking of oneself; that while considering it a wrong to deprive the delicate conscience of the consolation and the means of grace which Confession supplies, yet that it may become a mere softness and indulgent routine of devotion made to stand in the place of all else. While, too, he upholds the efficiency of absolution not merely as a discipline of the Church, but as an ordinance derived from our Lord's commission to His Apostles, he yet adduces the testimony of the Fathers, that sin is also remitted through acts of pure love to God. So, again, he guards against the idea of direction becoming a means of acquiring the absolute government over the soul, and of managing the weak; urging, moreover, that it is not to be regarded as any great mystery, but simply as a means of imparting counsel and advice towards the attainment of a more perfect spirituality. Again, as to the much canvassed question of attendance at the Holy Eucharist without communicating, alluding of course to early Communions, he is careful to show that this is but to fulfil half the purpose of the Institution; that only our unworthiness should exclude us from participation in what ought to be our daily bread; that all our life should tend to make us more worthy of Communion as frequently as possible; that even something is lacking to the sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist when

the people keep away from the altar, not daring to eat of the victim offered for them.*

Whatever opinions may be held on the above-mentioned subjects, it is impossible not to recognize the moderation and reality of such counsels proceeding from one who lived under the rule of the absolute necessity of Confession, and where attendance at the Blessed Sacrament, independent of Communion, has been carried to such a great excess. It is an instance of a striking characteristic which has been sought to be set forth throughout this review of the practical writings of the saintly Archbishop, that while ever reaching forth to the highest standard of spirituality, and even through this intense desire beguiled into serious error, he treated with a peculiar simplicity and practical good sense the details of a devotional life.

If, lastly, the question be asked where we are to place the '*Œuvres Spirituelles*,' in relation to other devotional books, the answer would be this,—that it is suited not so much to the earlier as to the more advanced stages of spiritual growth; that it is replete with counsels and warnings founded on a profound experience of the human heart; that to those who desire to probe the most subtle and most clinging sins and miseries of the inner life, it is invaluable; that to the sufferer it opens a path to the noblest forms of devotion and self-sacrifice, and suggests the most powerful supports; that it speaks specially to the educated, the refined, the courtly, and at the same time supplies most wholesome instruction to the devout and the contemplative; that, putting aside certain Papers in the collection specially designed to uphold

* Letters, vol. iv. pp. 403-17.

the Roman claims, and allowing for the psychological errors which have been pointed out, it presents to the mind, with a force and a beauty surpassed by none, if equally by any other devotional work, some of the noblest and most essential, as well as some of the tenderest and most affecting, constituents of a life growing into an increasingly perfect union with God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE 'DEVOTIONS' OF BISHOP ANDREWES.

The death of Bishop Andrewes, as described in the Funeral Sermon preached by Bishop Buckeridge; Andrewes as a preacher; character of his sermons; his style and manner of delivery; the school of Theology to which he belonged; effect of his sermons upon the Theology of the Church of England; Andrewes upon the Connection between the Mystery of the Incarnation and the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist; upon the Eucharistic Sacrifice; upon Absolution.—Andrewes as a devotional writer; analysis of his 'Devotions:' their length and minuteness; their breadth and comprehensiveness; their adaptation of the language of Holy Scripture; their reverential tone; their connection with Oriental Liturgies; are these 'Devotions' fitted for general use? the question answered in the affirmative; the uses of prayer as stated by Bishop Andrewes.

"We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."—ACTS vi. 4.

"VITA ejus vita orationis—his life was a life of prayer—a great part of five hours every day did he spend in prayer and devotion to God. After the death of his brother, which he took as a certain sign and prognostic and warning of his own death, till the hour of his dissolution, he spent all his time in prayer—and his prayer-book, when he was private, was seldom seen out of his hands—and in the time of his fever and last sickness, besides the often prayers which were read to him, in which he repeated all the parts of the Confession and other petitions with an audible voice, so long as his strength endured, he did, as was well observed by certain tokens in him, continually pray

to himself, though he seemed otherwise to rest or slumber; and when he could pray no longer with his voice, yet by lifting up his eyes and hands, he prayed still; and when both voice, and eyes, and hands failed in their office, then '*corde*,' with his heart, he prayed, until it pleased God to receive his blessed soul to Himself."*

In these words over the open grave in the Church of St. Saviour's, Southwark, did the preacher at his funeral describe the prayerful living and dying of Bishop Andrewes. Our proper subject to-day is the collection of prayers and meditations which he has left to us; but it is impossible to separate the idea of Andrewes as a devotional writer from that of Andrewes as a preacher. The sermons are the exponents of the doctrines upon which the 'Devotions' are based. The 'Devotions' are the spiritual application to the wants of the individual soul of the doctrines set forth in the sermons. I propose, therefore, to endeavour to give you some idea of Andrewes as a Preacher, and so to pass on to the consideration of his 'Devotions.'

Andrewes was born in Thames Street, in the parish of All Hallows, A.D. 1555, and was amongst the first group of scholars who filled the newly-founded Merchant Taylors School. From Merchant Taylors he proceeded to Pembroke College, Cambridge, of which he became ultimately Master. The old chapel† of that College was the first scene of the preaching which for so many years afterwards riveted the attention of the English Court. Andrewes was appointed to the office of Catechist of his College, and in that capacity delivered his Lectures upon the Decalogue, his earliest

* Bishop Buckeridge. Funeral Sermon. Bishop Andrewes' Sermons, vol. v. p. 304.

† A new chapel having been built by Bishop Wren, the old chapel is now the Library.

theological work. Subsequently he was brought under the notice of Secretary Walsingham, and during the reign of Elizabeth attained to the dignity of Dean of Westminster. It is stated in the sermon preached at his funeral that he refused the bishoprics of Ely and Salisbury at her hands from conscientious scruples as to the alienating some of the property of those sees, which was one of the conditions of the appointment. With the accession of James, his influence rapidly increased. He was at that time about forty-eight years of age, and probably at the height of his intellectual power. Promoted successively to the bishoprics of Chichester, Ely, and Winchester, he stood forth for a quarter of a century the great doctor of the Anglican Church. Through seventeen years it was he who every Christmas Day expounded to the Court of England the Mystery of the Incarnation. For eight years his was the voice which, at the beginning of Lent, sounded to the same audience the note of fasting and self-denial. Through eighteen years they heard every Easter morning from his lips the varying lessons of the Resurrection. Fifteen sermons preached before a similar congregation upon successive Whit Sundays unfolded in its fulness the fundamental doctrine of the Personality, Divinity, and continued agency of the Holy Spirit. The Sermons remain, and are still a vast storehouse of theology. Their effect to us will probably be marred by the over-minute dissection of Scriptural language, the play upon words, and frequent quaintness both of thought and expression. Their effect, as spoken by the living man to living men, is said to have been unequalled. Of his care in preparation, Bishop Buckeridge thus speaks: "He was always a diligent and painful preacher. Most of his solemn sermons he was most careful of, and exact. I dare say few of them but they passed

his hand, and were *thrice* revised before they were preached."* Of his *manner* and *delivery* another writes: "He was an unimitable preacher in his way, and such plagiarists who have stolen his sermons could never steal his preaching, could make nothing of that, of which he made all things as he desired."†

In estimating the influence of Andrewes as a preacher, we must bear in mind the age to which he belonged. Preaching was then a new power. The exposition of Holy Scripture had still all the freshness of novelty. Andrewes would be listened to not only as an eloquent teacher of familiar truths, but as having much and varied information to impart upon subjects then little understood. It is probable, therefore, that his preaching before the Court of England, prolonged through so many years, had no slight influence not only in consolidating the doctrinal system of the Church of England, but in preparing the Church for the stern probation which it was before long called upon to endure.

The life of Andrewes covers the reigns of Elizabeth and James, embracing a period of seventy-one years. In that period may be traced the germs of the whole after-history of the English Church. The two great schools of theology which have from that day to this existed within its pale, alternately dominating, always acting upon and moderating each other, are to be plainly discerned, not as yet concentrated into distinct parties, but rather interfused, so that it is easy to quote from the writings of one school passages which might equally have emanated from the other.

Andrewes is usually taken as a representative of the High Church School. As a general conception this is correct. But if we admit it, we must recognize him as evincing how the holding the very highest sacra-

* Bishop Buckeridge's Funeral Sermon.

† See Fuller's 'Worthies.'

mental doctrine may co-exist with a hearty acceptance of the reformed Anglican system — how a profound knowledge of and regard for the authority of the ancient Catholic Church may accord with a determined repudiation of the corruptions of a later age. Andrewes, as an expositor, never hesitated to point out wherein the Roman Church had erred, both in her definitions and her practice.

On the other hand, no man held more firmly or taught more plainly those great Catholic doctrines which have been handed down in an unbroken tradition from the Church of the first ages, and which, we thank God, were held fast by the English Church, amid many temptations to let them go—doctrines which mark us off by an impassable line from those Christian bodies which organized themselves afresh in the sixteenth century, and render any attempt to identify them with ourselves utterly hollow and unreal. Thus Andrewes, in his Christmas-day sermons, has set forth in every possible aspect the *Mystery of the Incarnation*—in every aspect connecting it with the kindred mystery of *Christ's continued Presence with His people* in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Is he speaking of the Word being made Flesh, and so taking *our nature upon Him*? The subject in his hands works up to *our* reciprocal partaking of *His* nature in Holy Communion. “Because,” he argues, “the children were partakers of Flesh and Blood, He also would take part with them—may we not say the same? It is most kindly to take part with Him in that which He took part in with us; and that to no other end but that He might make the receiving of it by us a means by which He might ‘dwell in us and we in Him.’ With this act, then, of ‘mutual taking’—taking of *His* Flesh as He hath taken *ours*—let us seal our duty to Him this day.”*

* Sermon i., “On the Nativity.”

Again: "Look how we do give back that He gave us, even so doth He give back to us that which we gave Him—that which He had of us. This He gave for us in Sacrifice, and this He gives us in the Sacrament that the Sacrifice may, by the Sacrament, be truly applied to us."*

Or is he speaking of the thankfulness which we owe to God for sending forth His Son? That thankfulness finds its fulness in the Eucharistic Feast. "Our service to Him is then at the full when no part is missing; when all our duties of preaching, and praying, of hymns, of offering, of Sacrament and all, meet together. No fulness there is of our Liturgy or public solemn service without the Sacrament. Some part—yea, the chief part—is wanting, if that be wanting."†

Or is the great name *Emmanuel* the subject of His preaching? That name (God with us) finds its closest application in the Lord's Supper. "This," he declares, "is the surest being with all that can be. Nothing is so with us, so ours, as that which we eat and drink down, which goeth and groweth one with us. This, then, I commend to you, even the being with Him in the Sacrament of His Body; that Body that was conceived and born, as for other ends, so for this specially to be *with you*, and this day, as for other intents, so even for this, for the Holy Eucharist."‡

And, once more, preaching upon the Angelic Hymn, we have the following noble passage, witnessing equally against materialistic views of the Sacrament and those which would evacuate It of the inner part:—"Of the Sacrament we may well say, 'This shall be a sign unto you; for a sign It is, and by It ye shall find this child.' For, finding His Flesh and Blood, ye cannot miss but find Him too. . . . Christ in the Sacrament is not altogether unlike Christ in the cratch. To the

* Sermon ii., "On the Nativity." † Sermon iv. ‡ Sermon ix.

cratch we may well liken the husk or outward symbols of It. Outwardly It seems little worth, but It is rich of contents, as was the crib this day with Christ in it. For what are they but weak and poor elements of themselves? Yet in them find we Christ. Even as they did this day in the beasts' crib the food of angels, which very food our signs both represent, and present unto us."*

Take his witness to another doctrine, much controverted among us. How simply, and yet how clearly and boldly, does he set forth the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice in the following passage :—"Remember Him? That we will and stay at home, think of Him there. Nay, show Him forth ye must. That we will by a sermon of Him. Nay, it must be '*Hoc facite*,' do this. It is not mental thinking, or verbal speaking; there must be actually somewhat done to celebrate this memory; that done to the holy symbols that was done to Him, to His Body and His Blood in the Passover; break the one, pour out the other, to represent, *κλώμενον*, how His sacred Body was 'broken,' and *ἐκχυνόμενον*, how His precious Blood was shed. And in *corpus fractum* and *sanguis fusus* there is *immolatus*. This is it in the Eucharist that answereth to the sacrifice in the Passover—the memorial to the figure. To them it was *Hoc facite in mei præfigurationem*, 'do this in prefiguration of Me.' To us it is: 'Do this in commemoration of Me.' By the same rules that theirs was, by the same may ours be termed a sacrifice. In rigour of speech neither of them; for to speak after the exact manner of Divinity, there is but one only sacrifice properly so called, i.e. Christ's death. And that sacrifice but once actually performed at His death, but ever before represented

* Sermon xii.

in figure from the beginning, and ever since repeated in memory to the world's end. That only absolute, all else relative to it, representative of it, operative by it. . . . That the centre in which their lines and ours, their types and our anti-types do meet. While yet this offering was not, the hope of it was kept alive by the prefiguration of it in theirs. And after it is past, the memory of it is still kept fresh in mind by the commemoration of it in ours. So it was the will of God, that so there might be with them a continual fore-showing, and with us a continual showing forth the Lord's death till He come again. Hence it is that what names theirs carried, ours do the like, and the Fathers make no scruple at it; no more need we."*

It is recorded by his earliest biographer† that Andrewes was a man "deeply seen in all cases of conscience, that in that respect he was much sought unto by many who ever received great satisfaction from him in clearing the doubts which did most perplex them." It seems an anticipation of the desire so generally existing amongst ourselves to quicken into new life old offices and institutions, when we read that Andrewes, having been appointed to a Prebend of St. Paul's—to which, before the Reformation, the duties of Penitentiary had been attached—used during Lent to walk at certain hours in one of the aisles of the Cathedral, to impart spiritual advice and comfort to such as came unto him.

We are not, therefore, surprised to find him feeling deeply and speaking strongly on the subject of the minister's personal dealing with souls; to hear him in one of his sermons maintaining the perpetual force of the commission first given to the Apostles, in the solemn words still used in our Ordination Service, "Whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven." Andrewes shrinks

* Sermon vii., "On the Resurrection."

† Isaacson's 'Life.'

not from affirming that "this was no personal privilege to be in them and to die with them; that they only should execute it for a time and none ever after them"—"that neither was it a gift common to all Christians in general, but committed to the Apostles as Ministers, Priests, or Preachers, and consequently to those that in that office and function do succeed them"—"that the remission of sins, as it is from God only, so is it by the death and blood-shedding of Christ alone; but for the applying of this to us there are diverse means established;" that repentance is a necessary condition of receiving remission; but that where true repentance is, "there is no delay between, no deferring or holding in suspense, but the absolution pronounced upon earth—*Remittuntur*—presently they are remitted."*

II. So far as to the outer life and teaching of Bishop Andrewes. He had given himself to the ministry of the Word. Like his latest deceased successor in the see of Winchester, he had been the voice of the Church of England upon almost every great public occasion. Not a little, as we gather, did he resemble him whom God has recently called away in the special charm of voice and manner, and in the inexhaustible fertility of his resources. "In his preaching," it was said of Andrewes, "he had such dexterity that he was quick again as soon as delivered."† For many years he stood forth the prominent figure in the ecclesiastical life of his age. For Andrewes, whilst rigorous in giving the forenoon of each day to study (hence the vast range of his acquirements, embracing the knowledge of fifteen languages), was not a religious recluse. He was, indeed, a scrupulous observer of the Fast of the Church, but he mingled freely in society—entertaining munificently

* Sermon, "Of the Power of Absolution."

† Isaacson's 'Life.'

both the chief men of his time in England, as well as strangers from abroad. He was a man of courts and cities, taking an active part in public affairs—whilst blameless in his demeanour as a clergyman—in the ministrations of his office, grave and majestic. What were the secret springs of this varied life? His death revealed them—in bringing to light the close communion in which he lived with his God. The 'Devotions' of Bishop Andrewes were not composed by him to assist the spiritual life of others, but for the cherishing of his own. They were prayed rather than written by their author; and only after his decease beheld the light. "Had you seen," writes their first translator, "the original manuscript, happy in the glorious deformity thereof, being slubbered with his pious hands and watered with his penitential tears, you would have been forced to confess that book belonged to no other than pure and primitive devotion."*

The 'Devotions' of Bishop Andrewes, as now collected, consist of two main parts. We have first an order of Matin and Evening Prayer, followed by a course of Prayers for each day in the week. These were originally written in Greek. No reason has been assigned for the selection of that language. It may probably have been chosen simply as a means of stimulating his own attention; or it may have arisen out of the circumstance that large portions are simply transcripts from the Liturgies of the Eastern Church. There is a second collection of Prayers, not arranged with reference to the days of the week, but under a variety of headings. These were originally compiled in Latin, and are far less finished and complete than the former series, but they form a most valuable supplement to it, containing prayers for almost every special occasion of the Christian life.

* Richard Drake, 1648.

The order of Daily Prayer is broken into six parts :—

(1.) An introductory Thanksgiving, having reference to God's creative work upon each day.

(2.) An Act of Confession.

(3.) A Prayer for Grace.

(4.) A Profession of Faith.

(5.) An Act of Intercession.

(6.) An Act of Praise.

The leading idea suggested by these forms is, that he who used them contemplated and arranged them as the machinery for a great act of holy worship. They are not the brief-penned prayers of one absorbed in a thousand pursuits, and snatching a short moment for the acknowledgment of God at the beginning or end of the day. They are the devotions of one with whom the worship of God was itself a main portion of the business of life. Hence the distinct recognition of all the several parts of worship. Hence the minuteness with which the free spirit enlarges upon its faults, its requirements, its mercies. We feel that if we would make these devotions our own, we must enter into our closets, shut to the door, and give ourselves, secured from interruptions, to a communing with God, limited by no pressing thought of time.

Observe in the following prayer for grace the minute subdivision of the theological thought, with the utmost conciseness of language :

“ Oh, to me, the meanest, grant the meanest place.

* * * *

And that this may be,

Let me find grace in Thy sight

To have grace,

So as to serve Thee acceptably,

With reverence and godly fear.

Let me find that second grace,

Not to receive in vain

The first grace ;

Not to come short of it,

Yea, not to neglect it

So as to fall from it,
 But to stir it up,
 So as to increase in it;
 Yea, to abide in it
 Till the end of my life."

Or take the following act of praise. How does the soul of the worshipper seem to rejoice in enlarging upon the mercies vouchsafed:—

"O Lord, my Lord,
 For my being, life, reason;
 For nurture, protection, guidance;
 For education, civil rights, religion;
 For Thy gifts of grace, nature, fortune;
 For redemption, regeneration, catechizing;
 For my call, recall, yea many calls beside;
 For Thy forbearance, long-suffering,
 To me-ward,
 Many seasons, many years, up to this time.
 * * * * *
 For my parents, honest and good,
 Teachers kind,
 Benefactors never to be forgotten,
 Religious intimates congenial,
 Hearers thoughtful,
 Friends sincere,
 Domestics faithful;
 For all who have advantaged me
 By writings, homilies, converse,
 Prayers, patterns, rebukes, injuries;
 For all these, and all others,
 Which I know, which I know not—
 Open, hidden,
 Remembered, forgotten,
 Done when I wished, when I wished not—
 I confess to Thee, and will confess,
 I bless Thee, and will bless;
 I give thanks unto Thee, and will give thanks,
 All the days of my life."

There is a whole biography in this act of praise. It owes not its length to any wordy amplification, but to the abundance of recollections embodied in it. Every clause is suggestive of some fact in the worshipper's life; and, as it dropped from his lips, would bear to be lingered upon for the images it would call up. We

can quite imagine how the devout soul thus pouring itself forth (each word unlocking the door of many memories) would altogether cease to take note of the lapse of time, and, rapt into the thought of God's exceeding goodness as manifested in His dealings with itself, would know neither weariness nor constraint in prolonging the sacrifice of its praise.

A second characteristic of Bishop Andrewes' 'Devotions' is their exceeding breadth and comprehensiveness. There are persons of a religious temperament so morbidly introspective as to be able to dwell untiringly upon their own weaknesses and wants, and to be comparatively listless in regard to anything beyond their own individual life. Bishop Andrewes' mind was of a totally different mould. In the deepest retirement he never seems to have lost sight of his fellowship with the Catholic Church of Christ. Alone upon his knees, he ever felt himself a portion of a mighty company—one of a brotherhood reaching throughout the world—ay, beyond the world; the scattered flocks of Christendom, all of suffering and sorrow, all of self-denial and godly patience—all of sin and penitence which the Universal Church contained—were within the range of his thought—Patriarchs, Apostles, Martyrs, gathered to the Paradise of God—the angels of the height in their mighty ministries, all as he praised their Lord and His, gathered round him, and he knew them for his elder brethren.

I am obliged to shorten the following noble intercessions adapted from the Liturgies of S. James and S. Basil, and can only recite enough to indicate the vastness of its compass.

“Remember all, O Lord, for good; have pity upon all; be reconciled with us all.

* * * * *

Remember Thy Holy Church from one end of the earth to the other, and give her peace.

222 THE 'DEVOTIONS' OF BISHOP ANDREWES.

Remember those who bear fruit and act nobly in Thy Churches,
and who remember the poor and needy.

* * * * *

Remember every Christian soul in affliction, distress, and trial;
Our brethren in captivity, prison, chains, and bitter bondage.
Give return to the wandering,

Health to the sick,

Deliverance to captives.

Remember religious and faithful kings, whom Thou hast given to
rule upon the earth.

Remember all in power and authority.

Remember our Holy Fathers, the Presbytery and Clergy, .

Rightly dividing the Word of Truth,

And rightly walking in it.

Remember, Lord, our brethren around us and praying with us at
this holy hour.

Remember also those who, on fair reasons, are away.

Preserve our marriages in concord;

Nourish our infants;

Lead forward our youth;

Sustain our aged;

Comfort the weak-hearted;

Gather together the scattered;

Restore the wanderers;

And knit them to Thy Holy Apostolic Church.

Set free the troubled with unclean spirits;

Voyage with the voyagers,

Travel with the travellers;

Stand forth for the widow,

Shield the orphan;

Rescue the captive,

Heal the sick.

* * * * *

O Saviour of the tempest-tost,

Do Thou Thyself become all things to all men.

Thou who knowest each man and his petition,

Each house and its need,

Deliver, O Lord, this city.

Remember, O Lord our God, *all* spirits, and *all* flesh, which we
have remembered and remembered not."

I might, if time permitted, dwell upon other characteristics of these 'Devotions,' such, for instance, as the wonderful familiarity which they evince with the language of Holy Scripture, and the singular felicity of its adaptation. It is not that Scripture phrases are

woven artificially into the texture of his prayers, but rather that the mind of Andrewes was so flooded with the knowledge of Scripture that he thought in its language, while his own poetical instincts directed him with unerring truth so as never to offend the most sensitive ear by the use made of its phraseology. Again, I might point out the spirit of reverence which so uniformly pervades the Book. There is no forgetfulness, even for a moment, through the stream of confession, prayer, praise (freely and abundantly as it flows along), of the awful Majesty of the Being addressed. This is especially remarkable in those passages in which the Second Person in the Trinity is more immediately invoked. There are many such passages; but in all, whilst the details of the divine passion are lingered upon as constituting, every one of them, a ground of hope and trust, He, whose pierced hands and side are prominent before the eye of the worshipper's soul, is nevertheless to that worshipper an object of profoundest awe, God over all blessed for ever. I do not know that the Holy Name "Jesus" is even once employed *alone* in addressing our Lord.

And now in conclusion. The object of these Lectures, as I understand it, is to lead to the employment of those "Helps to the devout life" which are brought before you, and here arises therefore the question whether the 'Devotions' of Bishop Andrewes are calculated for general use in the present day. And I have no hesitation in expressing my opinion that they are in many ways singularly adapted for such use. They are at once reverent and warm, close and personal, broad and comprehensive. They are full of profound and varied thought, yet brief and almost epigrammatic in expression. They are always suggestive of further reflection, so as to leave scope for the action of every man's own mind. A deep well of theology often lies hid under the cover of the simplest petition, as in the

Prayer for Grace already quoted. Above all, there is a tone of manly piety, equally removed from effeminate sentimentalism and mere frigid propriety, which especially fits them to the English religious mind, as the English Church would shape and nourish it. Bishop Andrewes himself in one of his sermons states the uses of prayer to be threefold. "There is the use of *necessity*, for God hath left prayer to be our city of refuge, to the end that when all means fail we should fly unto God by prayer. There is the use of *duty*, for prayer is compared to 'incense,' which giveth a sweet smell to all our works, words, and thoughts which otherwise would be offensive to the Majesty of God. Thirdly, there is the use of *dignity*, when a man doth abstract himself from the earth, and by often prayer doth grow into acquaintance and familiarity with God."* These three uses of prayer which Andrewes taught in his life, the 'Devotions' which his death gave to the Church will in no mean measure help whosoever employs them to fulfil.

I conclude with his own solemn words, in which we catch the echoes of the Liturgy of S. Chrysostom.

"The day is vanished and gone;
 So doth my life vanish—
 This lifeless life.
 Night cometh, and death—
 Death that is no death.
 Near as is the end of day, so, too, the end of life.
 We, therefore, remembering this,
 Beseech Thee, O Lord,
 For the close of our life, to guide it in peace,
 That it may be Christian, and acceptable to Thee,
 And, if it please Thee, without pain.
 Gathering us together under the feet of Thine Elect,
 When Thou wilt and as Thou wilt,
 Only without sin and shame. AMEN."

* Sermon v., "On Prayer."

THE 'CHRISTIAN YEAR.'

I. INTRODUCTION.—Two advantages of the preacher on the 'Christian Year:' 1. The special key-note of the book struck by Keble himself; 2. The remarkable influence of the book on Christian thought and life.—II. The "quietness" of its tone, fitting it for the companionship of daily life: 1. Seen in Keble's love of repose and sweetness in Nature; 2. Seen in his teaching of self-control and resignation; 3. Seen in the pervading spirit of reverence.—III. The conception of life to which this "soothing spirit" corresponds: 1. Belonging, not to its crises, but to its general tenour; 2. Unwelcome to either extreme of feeling; 3. Harmonizing with the tone of modern thought.—IV. The basis of that conception is faith in the Presence of God: 1. Deeply felt in Nature; 2. Imperfectly traced in humanity, as such; 3. Plainly manifested in the kingdom of grace.—That Presence realized by a deep personal faith in Christ, but especially in Christ crucified, as He is manifested in the past and present, and is waited for in "sure and certain hope" of the future.—V. CONCLUSION.—The true sources of power and vitality in the 'Christian Year.'

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."—ISA. xxx. 15.

ONE special advantage belongs to the preacher on the 'Christian Year,' that his text is fixed for him by the title-page of the book itself, and, moreover, that the preface, commenting upon this text, gives the exact key-note of the strain by which the author desired to "make melody" in the devout life. In all poets, indeed, who (according to the definition of the highest poetry laid down by Keble himself) sing because there is in their souls some overmastering idea or feeling, which demands audible expression—in other words, who, like the Prophets of old, cannot but speak "the word which the Lord putteth into their mouth," and which,

if they seek to close their lips, becomes "as a fire shut up in their bones," till "they are weary of forbearing and cannot stay"—in all such poets, I say, it is true that there must be what he himself calls "thoughts beyond their thought," awakening in other souls manifold echoes both of reflection and feeling, unknown to the original utterer, who is but the mouthpiece of the Lord. In the remarkable acceptance of the 'Christian Year,' all but universal in the Church, and largely pervading even the world—the more remarkable, I think, as contrasted with the comparative neglect of the maturer works of the same author—I cannot but trace unmistakable evidence that it does belong to this higher rank of poetry; and I can therefore easily believe that its actual power over men's souls may extend beyond the conceptions of the poet himself. But still it is an unmixed advantage to be guided by his own explicit declaration of the chief ideas which laboured in him for expression; even if the sweet melodies, conceived by him in the quiet parsonage at Fairford and the meditative solitude of Oxford, may have set themselves (so to speak) to some strange and half-discordant harmonies, when they sound (as, thank God! they have sounded already to hundreds of thousands) amidst the restless activity, the numberless distractions, the sad and almost bewildering perplexities of our own busier life—making themselves heard "amidst this loud stunning tide of human care and crime," because in them there is the sound, not of the passing human voice, but of God's "everlasting chime."

It is another advantage, great, although perhaps not quite unmixed, that the preacher has to deal here with a book, not merely familiar to the memories, and enshrined in the affections, of most of his hearers, but one which has wrought itself with extraordinary power into the very texture of the religious life of the day. It

is, I may remark, singularly instructive as to the inseparability of those elements or aspects of life, which men rightly distinguish, but often wrongly try to separate, that this book, which only desired to be a companion of the devout life—and that, too, not independently, but as simply as interpreting our Prayer Book—should have been so inseparably interwoven with the revival of a great theology among us, and with the diffusion through the body of the Church of a new idea of corporate life. When the thoughtful historian of the future traces the rise and growth of the great High Church movement of our own times, and marks how it has undoubtedly pervaded, in different degrees, the whole religious life of England, I imagine that he will trace at any rate the wide diffusion of its power, not so much to any works of professed theological doctrine or ecclesiastical statesmanship, as to the ‘Christian Year.’ The very fact of its humble subordination to the order and spirit of the Prayer Book, if at some points it has produced an artificiality of system, marked by considerable inequality of poetic force and beauty, yet has made it far more widely and more permanently powerful, as an element in the inner life of devotion. Self-effacement, here as elsewhere, has told where self-assertion would have failed; and he who was “willing to lose his life,” has found it, not for himself only, but for the world at large. The book is universally acknowledged to have struck a new key-note in the religious poetry of England. Itself yielding but few hymns to our services, it has deeply coloured, alike in thought and in tone, the great revival of hymnody, which is so remarkable a feature of our times. This power is no effect of mere fashion, or conscious imitation. It marks a profound spiritual influence, and that influence a living one still. Although the circulation of the book goes on by

hundreds of thousands,* it may be that, by the younger generation of my hearers, it is now less known and loved than it has been and is by us older men. But, if so, this is, partly at least, because it has already done its work, in moulding the religious life of England, and in helping to create offspring marked in part by other characteristics than its own; and so it is becoming fused with other religious influences, under the providence of Him, who "fulfils Himself in many ways." What (we may remark in passing) could have been to its author an object of more devout hope in prospect, and in retrospect a subject of profounder thankfulness, than this effect, which has been so unquestionably granted to his work? Great was his own personal influence—how great none will know till the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. But it was an influence which was, and which delighted to be, unknown except in its fruits. It told, moreover, not chiefly by the extent of his learning, or by his vigour and comprehensiveness of thought (which, indeed, have never been fully appreciated by the world), but rather through the directly spiritual influence of holiness and love. Such an influence, in the man and in the book, is one easier to feel than to exhibit—diffused through the whole system, like a nervous energy which the microscope of the most searching criticism cannot discover. Yet I question whether there is any one in this church

* The number of copies printed since the publication of the 'Christian Year' has steadily increased in each succeeding decade of years. In the first ten years it was 26,500; in the fourth decade (1857-1867), 119,500; in the five years following to the expiration of copyright in April 1873, 57,500, making in all 305,500 copies. Since that time the sale has been wonderfully enlarged. Messrs.

Parker alone had issued 70,000 copies at the end of 1875, another single firm 60,000, and other publishers also had been largely at work. Probably in fifty years its circulation in England must have reached half a million, to say nothing of a very large circulation in America. Such a sale for such a book is probably quite unexampled.

to-day, if he has in his soul any spark of true religious life, who is not—whether he knows it or not—living in some degree under the influence of the ‘Christian Year.’

But of religious thought and feeling there are many phases. These, again, reflect different experiences of life, as felt by a soul always living in communion with God. By such experiences different ideas of the ultimate truth, on which life rests, are suggested to understanding and to faith. I think that our consideration of the ‘Christian Year’ to-day may be made most definite and most profitable for us, if we direct it to these three questions—With what phase of religious feeling does this book especially harmonize? What view of religious life does it especially suggest? On what portion of Divine truth is this view especially based? To these three questions, which I think it behoves us to consider, Keble himself has, in the text and in the preface commenting upon it, supplied very sufficient answers.

I. First, then, the phase of religious life, to which he desired to appeal, and which, by that appeal, he sought to deepen, is (so he himself says) a state of “sober feeling,” the “quietness” of the text. Need I say that this tone of feeling is not that which belongs to the great crises of life? It is almost equally removed from the excitement of joy and the agony of sorrow; it lies midway between the brightest and darkest hours of the spiritual experience; it contains in it the germ of thoughtful contemplation, rather than of discovery and aspiration; it finds its natural vent in the steady work of every day, rather than the sharp, swift enthusiasm of conflict. The spirit which it breathes is that of Wordsworth’s desire—

“I would have my days to be
Linked one to one by natural piety.”

Living as Keble did in days of excitement, eager for novelty and impatient of anything not instantly effective, when men were yearning for something, they knew not what, and were prepared to believe that any movement was progress, he turned back to the English Prayer Book—so singularly uniting the old and the new, but with preponderance of the old—so emphatically subduing emotion to thought, and enthusiasm to reverence—in itself, like some old cathedral, embodying, in a unity, true, though varied and unsystematic, the conceptions and the aspirations of many centuries, and so carrying the thoughts away from the busy present to the silent seed-times of the past. He believed that its spirit of reverent, quiet, impressive solemnity, though by no means co-extensive with the whole of religious life, was exactly that element of it which his times most needed, and of which, just because they needed it, they were least likely to understand the need. Of that spirit he had drunk very deeply himself, from the days of the quiet home-training of his boyhood; it was (he believed) his mission to spread its influence to the souls of his fellow-men. In quietness he had found his own strength; and he felt that, after all, the crises of life, all-important as they are, are few and far between; the main part of life is, and must be, to all a time of steady duty, of patient endurance, of unstrained and unexcited thought. The food, which it needs, must be simple and wholesome, although to the jaded palate it may seem tasteless, and to the fainting weakness of pain and disease it may lack the needful stimulant. He who can teach to that every-day life the secret of a quietness which shall not be dulness, and who can supply the spiritual frame with the food on which it may grow unceasingly, though imperceptibly, from day to day—he (so Keble judged) may probably do service to men, less brilliant, but not less real, than the man who can

light up a beacon-fire in the hour of darkness, or bring the longed for succour in the crisis of sickness and of death; and certainly he may show forth the glory of the God, who speaks not so truly in the thunder and the earthquake, as in the "still small voice," telling its tale day by day only to the listening soul. So he judged for his own times. Can we doubt that the needs of those times have been increased and intensified in our own? We may, perhaps, at times doubt whether the quietness of the 'Christian Year' is a thing possible to us in these exciting and critical days, but we can hardly doubt that, if it can be ours, it will be among the chiefest blessings of rest and relief which God can give us.

We may easily see how this spirit of quietness shows itself in many forms.

Notice, for example, the peculiar attractiveness to his mind of those forms of natural beauty, which depend upon repose, simplicity, harmony, for their impression on the soul. I do not mean that he was insensible to delight in the grandeur, the awfulness, the mystery of Nature, as we behold it in the glorious scenery of the mountains, in the stormy majesty of the sea, or in the awful battles of the clouds and the blasts of Heaven.* But it is not on these that he habitually dwells. To use his own words, it

"Needs no show of mountain hoary,
Winding shore, or deepening glen,
Where the landscape in its glory
Teaches truth to wandering men:
Give true hearts but earth and sky,
And some flowers to bloom and die;
Homely scenes and simple views
Lowly thoughts may best infuse."†

* See the first two stanzas of his Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, and the first three of his

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

† See First Sunday after Epiphany.

The simple loveliness of the spring flowers, the morning concert of the woods, or in "the silence as of summer noon," through the hush before the shower, the "clear note of some lonely bird,"* the quiet English brook, overhung with the willow boughs, the oleanders on Gennesareth, where

" All through the summer night,
Those blossoms red and bright
Spread their soft breasts, unheeding, to the breeze," †

—these are the aspects of Nature which seem most constantly to tell their tale of peace to him. Probably, like most true artists, he drew his pictures chiefly from Nature, and it was amidst scenery of this sweet and homely kind that the 'Christian Year' was composed. But when this was not so, and when, with what has been noted as a singular felicity, he caught the spirit of scenes imagined and not seen, still the same tone has been preserved. Witness the vivid picture of Canaan, in his Third Sunday in Lent :

" Oft as they watch'd, at thoughtful eve,
A gale from bowers of balm
Sweep o'er the billowy corn, and heave
The tresses of the palm,
Just as the lingering sun had touched with gold,
Far o'er the cedar shade, some tower of giants old."

Nor can we well fail to mark, as characteristic of the same love of repose, the obvious preference which he seems to show for the pensive loveliness of the evening over the bright freshness of the morning ; ‡ and, as

* See Fifth Sunday after Easter.

† See Third Sunday in Advent.

‡ Thus, in his Morning Hymn, there seems an idea that morning is too bright and gorgeous for a world of sin and sorrow :

' Why waste your treasures of delight
Upon our thankless, joyless sight?'

Note also the beautiful contrast

in his Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity, between the rainbow at morning and the rainbow at night, and the delight with which he lingers over the evening picture :

" Serenely bright,
As in th' autumnal heaven
Mild rainbow tints at night,

still more significant, the sadness which he feels in spring, even when

“Along the violet banks he roves,”

and hears how

“ . . . Nature sings of joy and hope alone,
Reading her cheerful lesson in her own sweet time,”*

compared with his peculiar delight in what others call the “wan autumnal sun,”† in the reddening leaves so calmly floating,

“Each to his nest beneath the parent shade ;”‡

and in the song of the Red-breast, “the messenger of calm decay,” in which

“The lesson of sweet peace I read,
Rather in all to be resigned than blest.”§

And, as it is in respect of Nature, so also is it with him in the contemplation of humanity. Every one must notice his love of the quiet home life, as opposed to the busy excitement of the world, and the delight in the novelty of travel. Every one has seen, not without some sense of pathos, how that, childless as he was, he had a special love for the sweet simplicity of childhood and of childlike natures. But here, also, how characteristic it is that—

When the last hour is stealing down,
And ere they sink to rest
The sunbeams weave a parting crown
For some sweet woodland nest.”

His favourite epithet of ‘thoughtful eve’ probably suggests the reason of his preference.

* See Third Sunday after Easter, one, perhaps, of the most characteristic of all the poems of the ‘Christian Year.’

† See Burial of the Dead :

“Who says the wan autumnal sun
Beams with too faint a smile

To light up Nature’s face again,
And, though the year be on the wane,
With thoughts of Spring the heart
beguile?

Waft him, thou soft September breeze,
And gently lay him down
Within some circling woodland wall,
Where bright leaves, reddening ere they
fall,
Wave gaily o’er the waters brown.”

‡ See Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

§ See Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

"'Tis not the eye of keenest blaze,
 Nor the quick-swelling breast,
 That soonest thrills at touch of praise—
 These do not please him best.
 But voices low and gentle,
 And timid glances shy,
 That seem for aid parental
 To sue all wistfully." *

So, again, in his Advent survey of the spiritual life of the Church, you remember how, amidst the decaying ages, it is in the quiet hermitage of St. Jerome, in the gentle stainless spirit of St. Louis, and (by what seems to us a quaint but most characteristic selection) in the meek simplicity of an Izaak Walton, that he finds his "soft green isles" of repose "upon the desert road."† Everywhere it seems his mission to bring out to us the moral beauty and the secret strength of characters, which seem to the world too humble and timid, and of lives apparently homely and commonplace; and to show how peculiarly they have in them the "mind of Christ Jesus," and so all are "precious in God's sight, since Christ on all has shined."

Both in the repose of Nature and the retirement and humility of human character, he finds his much-loved quietness. How often in both has he accustomed the eye of our mental vision to appreciate delicacy and softness of colouring! How often has he brought us to understand and to love, what the world passes carelessly by as tame and feeble!

But he knew well that, in order thus to understand quietness without, there must be quietness within; and accordingly he teaches us most emphatically the quietness of self-control, and the quietness of humility and reverence. First, that quietness of self-control, under which the passions and the appetites lie at the

* See Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

† See Advent Sunday.

feet of the spirit, and natural hopes and fears are kept in check by the golden band of Resignation. He had no sympathy with the modern notion of the grandeur of mere passion as an element in the richness and power of life. Passion was in his eyes as a demoniacal possession of the soul, which Christ would have sit at His feet, clothed and in a right mind.

“Woe to the wayward heart,
That gladder turns to eye the shuddering start
Of Passion in her might,
Than marks the silent growth of grace and light.” *

Possibly, in his recoil from it, he may have looked with some jealousy even on the excitement of ardent hope and religious enthusiasm. We seem to trace from time to time a touch of asceticism in his views of life, chilling the warmth even of Christian freedom. How characteristic these lines—

“Christ watches by a Christian’s hearth;
Be silent, ‘vain, deluding mirth,’
Till in thine alter’d voice be known
Something of Resignation’s tone.” †

How sad and sweet the tone of that beautiful Morning Hymn, in which he bids us, if we can but have

“Room to deny ourselves; a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God.
Seek we no more; content with these,
Let present Rapture, Comfort, Ease,
As Heaven shall bid them, come and go:
The secret this of rest below.”

Nor can anyone have failed to note his constant teaching of the right reserve of our deepest feelings, kept from the outburst of excited expression, and laid

* See Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

† See Second Sunday in Advent.

up before God alone. Who can forget the singular beauty of the poem, in which, dwelling, as in a parable, on the silent secrecy of Nature, in the unfolding of her first flower and the lighting of the first evening star, he asks how can

“ . . . gentle hearts and true
Bare to the rude world's withering view,
Their treasure of delight?” *

But in the quietness of this self-control there is nothing of the marble dignity of the Stoic. Its quietness is sustained by the holier quietness of humility and reverence. Surely in no spirit was there ever a deeper humility. Even in comparison with his fellow-men, his thoughts of himself carried that humility almost to a noble excess; and he shrank from all publicity, except when it was forced upon him, to the quiet retirement which he had chosen for himself. But the true spring of humility, in him, as in all men who are lowly without being mean in temper, was in the spirit of reverence; and reverence can never find any ultimate resting-place, except in the consciousness of God. To him there were ever present the sense of an Almighty Power, around and beneath us, in the arms of which our weakness is secure—the sense of a Divine wisdom, ordering all things well, even those which seem to our blindness dreary and dark—the sense of a perfect Righteousness, awful in its beauty to our sinful eyes—the sense, above all, of a love, unfailing and all-embracing as “the glorious sky” itself, shaming our own coldness and thanklessness of heart. “The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the Earth keep silence before Him;” “It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good”—these are the conceptions embodied again

* See Fourth Sunday in Lent.

and again, in every page of the ‘Christian Year.’ In them, far more than in the repose of Nature, and the calmness of self-control, lies the secret of the true quietness.

II. Our brief survey of the ‘Christian Year’ certainly seems to show that this, or something like this, is the peculiar phase of the religious spirit, which Keble especially teaches. I pass to the second question: “To what conception of life does it correspond?”

He speaks in his preface of the “soothing spirit” of the Prayer Book, as that which he desires to exhibit. What do the need and possibility of a soothing spirit imply?

They imply undoubtedly the sense of something out of joint in this life, and yet that something capable of being cured and set right. For, without the first, the endeavour to soothe is needless; without the second, it is worse than useless. They imply the existence in the world of sorrow and suffering, a “groaning and travailing together in pain,” but a sorrow which can be turned into joy, and a travail which is but the throes of a new and glorious birth. They imply the existence in this life of much that is dark, perplexing, bewildering; but yet so, that even now it is but the exception, and that in God’s own time it shall pass away. They imply that in man’s soul there is a power of sin, marring and degrading his humanity, making him unworthy of the glory and beauty of Nature, unworthy of his own high gifts and capacities, unworthy of his natural communion with God; but yet that this sin cannot, except by his own wilful choice, destroy the image of God in him; that it can be, and must be, conquered, and the soul renewed to the “princely heart of innocence.” They imply the sense of decay, transitoriness, death, so deeply marked on Nature and humanity, as to make all seem unreal and empty; but yet also the sure and

certain hope, that breathes over the soul of the mourners an "awful soothing calm," till

" they gladlier rest
 Their darlings on earth's quiet breast,
 And their hearts feel they must not break." *

In fact, in all these forms, recognizing the presence of sorrow and perplexity, of sin and death, the soothing spirit yet claims to do exactly what Shakspeare's *Macbeth* despairs of—to

" . . . minister to the mind diseased,
 Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
 Raze out the written troubles of the brain."

So Keble himself expresses it:—

"The world's a room of sickness, where each heart
 Knows its own anguish and unrest.
 The truest wisdom there, and noblest art,
 Is his, who skills of comfort best." †

Even of the Church of Christ itself, Keble expressly declared that his book everywhere "regarded the Church as in a state of decay;" living (as he elsewhere says) under the dreariness of a "dark and wintry time." ‡ But it was a decay which had not penetrated to the heart; and which he contemplated as at any moment capable of giving way before a new rush of spiritual life, perhaps (as it seemed to him) before a mere revival of old simplicity of faith and practice. And, as of the

* See Burial of the Dead.

† See St. Barnabas' Day.

‡ See his Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity:

"Stately thy walls, and holy are the
 prayers
 Which, day and night, before thine
 altars rise:
 Not statelier, towering o'er her marble
 stairs,
 Flash'd Sion's gilded dome to sum-
 mer skies;
 Not holier, while around him angels
 bow'd,

From Aaron's censer steamed the
 spicy cloud

Before the mercy-seat. O Mother
 dear,

Wilt thou forgive thy son one boding
 sigh

Forgive, if round thy towers he walk
 in fear,

And tell thy jewels o'er with jealous
 eye?

Mindful of that sad vision which, in
 thought,

From Chebar's plains the captive
 prophet brought."

Church, so it is also with his view of the Christian soul. He feels, deeply and painfully, its decay, its fall from its high estate, its danger of eternal loss—so deeply and painfully, that the ready belief in God's forgiveness as a matter of course, and the confident reading of a "title clear to mansions in the skies," seems to him very like presumption.* But never for a moment does he doubt that there is a medicine for the soul's sin, and a life which can conquer its decay.

This is clearly, to my mind, the view of the world and of life to which the 'Christian Year' addresses its soothing strains. Probably it is not a view which will satisfy either extreme of thought. To the Christian enthusiast it seems deficient in rapture, assurance, enthusiasm. He will accept the exhortation—

"Mount up, for Heaven is won by prayer;"

but he resents the caution—

"Be sober, for thou art not there."

It may be confessed, perhaps, that the great crises of life's struggle are likely to demand a more stirring strain; and that to carry us over the dead-points of life we need a swifter and more unrestrained impulse. So, on the other hand, those who feel, with sharp anguish or dull aching pain, the contradictions and mysteries of this life, till they almost glide into the old monstrous beliefs, now of a dualism of rival gods of good and evil, now of a Creator limited either in power or in goodness,† and even come to doubt whether sin and cruelty are not man's nature, and righteousness and mercy a mere dream—these may think that Keble

* See especially his Second Sunday in Lent, and his characteristic note on the "efficacy of a death-bed repentance." "Such

questions are best left in the merciful obscurity with which Scripture has enveloped them."

† See Mill's 'Essays on Theism.'

has no insight into the depths of the doubt which oppresses them, and in their dark hour turn from his message as a tale of little meaning. It may be so. But I believe that serious thought, pondering life, not only in its extremes of brightness and darkness, but in the general tenour of its half-shadowed light, will say of Keble's view, "We know not whether it may be thought grand and cheering, but it is true; and he who can bring it home to us has not failed in that blessed task of healing and soothing, which he has taken for his own."

It may well be thought that this view of a sadness, not wholly painful, and capable of co-existing with an intense sense of the various elements of beauty and sweetness of life, is characteristic of most of our modern art and literature, and perhaps not unconnected with the high culture and complex civilization, which at once suggest a lofty ideal, and bring home to us the defects in our actual attainment of it. Possibly in this lies some part of the magic, which has given to a book, that hardly seemed likely to be popular, so wonderful a popularity with all educated minds. But that sadness expresses itself in widely different ways. The great fundamental difference, which is one of principle, is the difference between the sadness of a plaintive or defiant despair, and the sadness which in Keble is calmed by faith and lit up by hope. The other difference, which is one of artistic and philosophic insight, is the difference between the representation of life with those alternate bands (so to speak) of light and darkness, which we so often gaze upon in a stormy sunset, and a picture, such as Keble draws, where light and darkness interpenetrate each other, and yield a soft calmness of beauty, which at first may seem pale and colourless, but which soothes the eye, and quietly sinks down into the heart.

III. Such is Keble's ideal of quietness; such his sense of the need of soothing and healing in this life. What is the secret of this quietness in a restless world? What is his panacea for the soul diseased?

"In quietness" (he says) "and in confidence"—the confidence of faith in a God, in whom "we live and move and have our being." His is a faith, seldom rapturous, seldom quite untinged by the sense of unworthiness and self-distrust; at times we might even think it too much saddened by godly fear. But it is a faith deep, unwavering, profoundly loving, rejoicing to lose itself in God. Perhaps one of his most beautiful and characteristic poems is the one in which he refers to the celebrated prayer of Ajax against darkness—

"Only disperse the cloud, they cry,
And if our fate be death, give light, and let us die;"

and deems it perhaps noble, but "unwise," "unmeet," for such beings as we are in such a world as this,

"Who on God's guiding hand unseen,
With undivided hearts should lean."

Not that he had not felt the longing for light, but that he had lost it in the repose of faith.

"So be it, Lord; I know it best.
Though not as yet this wayward breast
Beat quite in answer to Thy voice,
Yet surely I have made my choice." *

In that faith lies "the victory which overcomes the world." "God is in the midst of us, and we shall not be moved."

* See Sixth Sunday after Epiphany. It is interesting to compare with this utterance of Keble the similar vein of thought in that noble hymn of Dr. Newman, which has made its way into all our hymn-books, although it seems almost too high and solitary a strain for ordinary worship ("Lead, kindly Light").

This presence of God, as it seems to me, he feels deeply in the kingdom of external nature, far more deeply in the kingdom of grace, less perhaps than we might have expected in the kingdom of humanity.

Deeply in external nature. The discords and terrors from which some recoil, the ruthlessness of physical laws, the absence of sympathy in Nature with the sorrows and joys of man—these things either pass by him unfelt, or, if felt, are soon overborne. Everywhere he hears

“ In the low chant of wakeful birds,
In the deep, weltering flood,
In whispering leaves, the solemn words,
‘ God made us all for good.’ ”

To him it seems

“ All true, all faultless, all in tune,
Creation’s wondrous choir.”

But when he turns to man, the sense of sin so oppresses him that the deeper and truer witness of God in humanity is comparatively obscured. He feels that there are discords which mar Nature’s “sweet accord;” may we not think that he sometimes forgets how these discords are subordinated to a nobler and more spiritual harmony? There is a painful revulsion of feeling in the question of his Morning Hymn, in which, after dwelling on the various forms of loveliness of the morning, he asks—

“ Why waste your treasures of delight
Upon our thankless, joyless sight,
Who day by day to sin awake,
Seldom of Heaven and you partake? ”

and, when this has passed by, it is clear that its effect lasts in the subdued and chastened tone of the thoughts, even of thankfulness, which follow. It is only when

the sin which has "been with man from morning break," has wearied itself out, that—

"As Eve's silent footfall steals
 Along the eastern sky,
 And one by one to earth reveals
 Those purer lights on high,
 When one by one each human sound
 Dies on the awful ear,
 Then Nature's voice no more is drowned,
 She speaks, and we must hear." *

Even then it is in Nature's voice, not in the voice of human thought, aspiration, imagination, that he hears the voice of God. There is, indeed, a beautiful poem, redolent especially of classical associations, which tells how

"The olive-wreath, the ivied wand,
 'The sword in myrtles drest,'
 Each legend of the shadowy strand
 Now wakes a vision blest.

As little children lisp and tell of Heaven,
 So thoughts beyond their thought to those high bards were given." †

Yet we note that these are compared to the blessings of Canaan, "relics of a guilty race," "forfeited to the friends" of God, who is, in respect of them, "our Lord and spoiler of our foes." Generally, his thought seems to shrink from the world of humanity, except where he can gain the conception of it as regenerated and redeemed to become the kingdom of God. It seems to him that

"Th' historic Muse, from age to age,
 Thro' many a waste, heart-sickenening page,
 . Has traced the works of man." ‡

Even an angel's gaze, ranging over "kings and kingdoms here," can only see a "dreary maze" in

* See Fourth Sunday after Trinity. † See Third Sunday in Lent.
 ‡ See Fifth Sunday in Lent.

which God "teaches love and fear." Very far is it from bearing to him the same witness of God which he traces in Nature, and as to which he prays—

"Thou, who hast given me eyes to see,
And love this sight so fair,
Give me a heart to find out Thee,
And read Thee everywhere." *

But yet Keble is far from being one of those poets who take refuge from this sense of the weakness and sin of humanity in Nature, and in Nature alone. It is on our redeemed humanity in the kingdom of grace that his faith really finds its ultimate rest. The year to him is not marked primarily by the natural seasons. It is the 'Christian Year,' and its seasons are the manifestations of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Underlying the beauty of his sweet and gentle poetry, there is, we know well, a clear, definite, profound faith in a great body of revealed truth, and in a great system of manifested grace. Those two leading conceptions, which Dr. Newman in his 'Apologia' has truly declared to have been the soul of the Church movement—first, the belief in an eternal truth of God, revealed in clearness when all else seems vague, revealed in unchangeable continuity amidst all changes of life and all variations of thought; next, the faith in a real abiding presence of Christ in His Church, manifesting itself through grace to each of His members—these two not only pervade the whole 'Christian Year,' but have been wrought by it—perhaps by it mainly—into the faith of our times. I will not say that the hard, stern lines of theology never show themselves through the fair vesture of poetry. I need not here enter into the weary discussions of the well-known altera-

* See Septuagesima Sunday.

tion,*—to my mind, I will not deny, unhappy, in relation both to the idea of the poem, and to theological truth—in which is involved one of the great controversies now vexing our Church of England. I will not say that some artificialities of ecclesiastical symbolism never jar on the natural utterances of his saintly aspiration and devotion. But these things are absolutely exceptional. The rule lies the other way. The ‘Christian Year’ seems to show, among other things, how loving devotion and glow of poetry may grow from the root of a clear and definite theology, and may find their free development in the precincts of the paradise of God.

And the secret of this, brethren,—need I tell it you? It lies in the fact that he realizes both truth and grace, not in cold abstraction, but in the personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

How exquisite the plaintive music of those well-known words in his Evening Hymn!

“ Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without Thee I cannot live;
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without Thee I dare not die.”

How deep the sense of the new inspiration of poetic song in the Hosannas, which welcome the coming of Christ to the soul, and yet how characteristic the humility which prays that, while His praises are sung by those to whom He has given the high gift of poesy—

“ We the while of meaner birth,
Who, in that divinest spell,
May not hope to join on earth,
Give us grace to listen well.

* In the “Gunpowder Treason,” not till after his death, although
from “Not in the hands” to “As (it is certain) by his desire.
in the hands,” an alteration made

But should thankless silence seal
 Lips that might half Heaven reveal—
 Should bards in idol-hymns profane
 The sacred, soul-enthraling strain
 Then waken into sound divine
 The very pavement of Thy shrine,
 Till we, like Heaven's star-sprinkled floor,
 Faintly give back what we adore." *

Nor can we fail to see how, like S. Paul, he determines to know chiefly not Christ only, but "Christ as crucified." If the view of life, and if the object which he proposes to himself be such as I have described, we shall not wonder at this; but certain it is that (again to use his own words)—

"To the Cross his eye doth turn
 Sooner than where the stars of Christmas burn;
 Sooner than where the Easter sun
 Shines glorious on yon open grave
 Sooner than where upon the Saviour's friends
 The very Comforter in light and love descends." †

It is under the shadow of the Holy week that he seems most truly to know Christ. How deep the simple pathos of his picture of the weeping over Jerusalem, not in the "Conqueror's grief," not in the "Martyr's tears," but in the "Saviour's woe,"

"Because we will not let Him keep
 The souls He died to win." ‡

As we draw nearer to the Cross itself, note how the solemnity of tone and the insight of love deepen. How wonderfully he brings Christ home to each of us in that personal tenderness, in which

"Thou art as much His care as if beside
 Nor man nor angel lived in Heav'n or earth.
 On thee and thine, thy warfare and thy end,
 E'en in His hour of agony He thought." §

* See Palm Sunday.

† See his Good Friday.

‡ See his Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

§ See Monday before Easter.

How deeply he feels the blessing of that Divine sympathy, through which,

“To the still wrestlings of the lonely heart,
He doth impart
The virtue of His midnight agony.” *

But, above all, it is in the contemplation of His perfect sacrifice, far more than in the joy of Christmas or the adoration of Easter, that his poetry rises to that strain, which seems to me far the highest and grandest of all that he ever sung—

“Thou wilt feel all, that Thou mayst pity all,
And rather wouldst Thou wrestle with strong pain
Than overcloud Thy soul,
So clear in agony,
Or lose one glimpse of Heaven before the time.
O most entire and perfect sacrifice,
Renewed in every pulse,
That on the tedious Cross
Told the long hours of death, as, one by one,
The life-strings of that tender heart gave way!” †

Can we wonder that it is so? If we have rightly conceived his longing for quietness and peace, his deep sense of a sorrow and sin in this life needing to be soothed and healed, can we wonder that of all the prayers of his ‘Christian Year’ there is none so fervent as the prayer of his Good Friday—

“Wash me, and dry these bitter tears,
O let my heart no further roam!
’Tis Thine by vows, and hopes, and fears,
Long since—O call Thy wanderer home!
To that dear home, safe in Thy wounded side,
Where only broken hearts their sin and shame may hide.”

Such is his confidence of Faith, realizing at once the manifestation of Christ in the past, and His abiding presence with us now. But the picture of it is not

* See Wednesday before Easter.

† See Tuesday before Easter.

complete without the light thrown upon it in every line by "sure and certain hope." If in any degree the sky of this life be to him overclouded, the light of the other is always on the horizon, telling of the time when all clouds of sin, all mists of doubt and sorrow, all darkness of death shall so give way before it, that it shall cover the whole heaven of our consciousness, and Christ be to us all in all. No student of the 'Christian Year' can ever forget the pathetic lines, alluding (it is understood) to his own personal experience, in which he tells

"Of the bright things of earth and air,
How little can the heart embrace!"

—tells us of the mist that dims his eyes, of the "dull and tuneless ear," which in vain "lingers by soft Music's cell," and of the blank which robs Memory of "the scene and glance it dearest loves," and then bursts out into the words of joyful confidence—

"But patience! there may come a time
When these dull ears shall scan aright
Strains, that outring earth's drowsy chime,
As Heaven outshines the taper's light.
These eyes, that dazzled now and weak,
At glancing motes in sunshine wink,
Shall see the King's full glory break,
Nor from the blissful vision shrink." *

In that well-known passage we hear the music which pervades the whole book, running, like an undercurrent of sweet melody, through all strains, whether joyous or sad. Alike by the blessings of this life and by its imperfections his soul is borne on towards Heaven. In the one he reads the earnest, in the other the need, of that glorious future. The beauty of Nature, the wondrous powers of humanity, and even the present

* Fourth Sunday in Advent.

manifestation of God's truth and grace in Jesus Christ—all fill the soul with the vision of that perfection of which they can as yet but give us the germ. And if the sense of suffering, dulness, loneliness in life—if the consciousness of sin, crossing our highest aspirations and marring our holiest thoughts—if the chill feeling of the presence of Death, rising like the skeleton at life's feast, or gradually beckoning away those who are to us as our own soul—if these things press heavy on us, still the thought shines, like a beacon over the waves of this troublesome life, that

“When the shore is won at last,
Who will count the billows past?”

There may be books of devotion in which such hope is more rapturous, more vivid; but I doubt whether there is one in which it better deserves the name of “confidence.” For it sees the future through the eyes (if I may so say) of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it grasps His hand to lead us to the place, which He knows, because He has prepared it.

My brethren, I have sought thus to suggest to you the place which the ‘Christian Year’ occupies, not in the roll of poetic fame, nor in the great fabric of Christian theology, but as a companion of the devout life. It is, as I have already suggested, a book for the quiet and thoughtful companionship of every day, growing upon our affections, and by its influence telling upon our souls, gradually, silently, and therefore deeply. I can quite imagine that its voice may be too quiet to be heard at those critical times which need a trumpet-tone of encouragement or of warning. It is quite possible that at all times it may speak most clearly to the soul, which is being taught to prize consolation rather than hope, to delight in peace more than in joy. But it is a book which, as it has already

done priceless spiritual service, so will live to do infinitely more.

I believe, as I hope, this, because it is a book which, with all its constant reverence and not unfrequent regrets for the past, is a book of modern life, written by one who has felt and thought on the questions by which God tries us now, and in whom simplicity is the simplicity not of shallowness but of depth. I believe it, because it is a book which, while it has told its tale to thousands of Christian souls separated from us,* is, to my mind, essentially one of the plants which spring from the soil of our English Church. It has marvellously succeeded in its design of interpreting our Prayer Book, and in the task has caught its essential spirit. As we read it, and compare it with the 'Apologia,' we can understand, I think, why, to our infinite gain, we kept John Keble, while, to our infinite loss, we failed to keep John Henry Newman. I believe this, still more, because it is a book which leads the soul up to God, not through one, but through all, of the various faculties which He has implanted in it, appealing to the mind by its insight and thoughtfulness, to the conscience by its righteousness, loftiness, purity of tone, to the imagination by that intuition and reproduction of beauty which is the true poet's gift, and to the heart by the spirit of humble and trustful love. But I believe this most of all, because there is in it that true fire of God's Spirit, from which streams at once the pure light of Divine truth,

* It is not a little remarkable that one of the best and most appreciative criticisms on the 'Christian Year' appeared in the pages of the 'North British Review,' from the pen of one (Principal Shairp) who knew Oxford, and knew Keble well, but who

yet could not but contemplate the book from (so to speak) an external point of view. The essay has been reprinted, as it well deserves to be. To it I owe many suggestions; and, indeed, to it every lover of the 'Christian Year' must feel deeply indebted.

and the glowing energy of Divine grace. He who wrote it knew these and lived his life in these ; therefore it is that he can be God's instrument to kindle them in others.

For such a book—for its effect on the whole Church, for the effect which many of us have felt in the secret meditations known only to God—we are, we must be, deeply thankful. Thankful in part to the writer himself, with that thankfulness which has made his name a dear household word, and raised a noble memorial to him in the University he so truly loved. But thankful first and last, as his own childlike soul would have desired, to God—to the Father from whose love to His children comes all that is good, and sweet, and holy ; to the Saviour, in whose blood our sonship is redeemed, and in whose exaltation our birthright in heaven is secured ; to the Spirit, whose voice in our hearts casts out fear by love, bids us cry, “Abba ! Father !” and teaches us how to call His wandering sons home to Him.

MILTON'S 'PARADISE LOST.'

1. The devout life intimately connected with a Scriptural apprehension of things unseen.—2. Milton himself a true poem; his love for the beautiful and the good; his reverence for the Word of God; his dependence on the teaching of the Divine Spirit.—3. Some features of 'Paradise Lost' which are most helpful to the devotional life; its pictures of Eden before the fall; its delineation of human love; its sketches of the ministry of angels.—4. Satan the hero of 'Paradise Lost;' the peril of this: not a necessary conception, if the hints of revelation regarding the time and place of the fall of man and the expulsion of the lost angels from heaven are followed out. Our present contest with the powers of darkness.—5. The walk of faith. 'Paradise Lost' and 'Pilgrim's Progress.' Our preparation for eternity.

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."—2 COR. iv. 18.

It may seem strange to you, at first sight, to number Milton's 'Paradise Lost' among books which are companions for the devout life. There are not a few who would readily admit its influence on English Theology, but who would question any claim advanced on its behalf to be an aid to personal piety. And yet, my friends, you will confess how much the devout life owes to a frequent and steadfast gaze on things unseen and eternal; how difficult we all find it to fix the mind on abstract realities; and how instinctively our thoughts of the invisible take their colour and complexion from any word-painting which has vividly impressed our imagination. Pictorial teaching has a vast, though

undefined and often unsuspected, power; and with most of us, perhaps, who are here present to-day, the pictures of Milton's great epic are like stained-glass windows in the oratory of the soul, many of them very beautiful, and after heaven's own designs, but some of them, I venture to think, not altogether in harmony with the Scriptures of truth.

Thus his indefatigable biographer and loving eulogist, Masson, writes, "What story mightier or more full of meaning can there ever be than that of the archangel rebelling in heaven, degraded from heaven into hell, re-ascending from hell to the human universe, winging through the starry spaces of that universe, and at last possessing himself of our central earth, and impregnating its incipient history with the spirit of Evil. Vastness of scene, and power of story together, little wonder that the poem should have so impressed the world. Little wonder that it should now be Milton's Satan and Milton's narrative of the creation, in its various transcendental connections, that are in possession of the British imagination, rather than the strict Biblical accounts from which Milton so scrupulously derived the hints to which he gave such marvellous expansion." *

This witness is true. But while we may freely admit that Milton drew out all the germs of his great thoughts from the Scriptures, it is another question whether he has presented them to us in their Scriptural sequence, and expanded them in their Scriptural proportion. Granted that he has often marvellously succeeded, yet whereinsoever he has failed in this, the result must be a distorted image cast upon the retina of the soul's eye. If to-day, not without prayer

* Masson's 'Introduction,' p. 47.

for that Holy Spirit whose heavenly assistance he always so humbly and earnestly besought, we can deepen our conceptions of the many true and beautiful visions which Milton sketched, and can at the same time distinguish other figures and scenes which are not according to the analogy of the faith, the time which we devote to meditation upon this great theme will not be in vain.

2. Milton is an illustrious example how God prepares the instruments which He designs to employ. He was born in the year of our Lord 1608, and died in 1674. And his early education at St. Paul's School, in the heart of London; his studies crowned with honours at Cambridge; the five years of quiet retirement which he spent under his father's roof at Horton, and adorned with the exquisite creations of his 'Allegro' and 'Penseroso,' his 'Comus' and his 'Lycidas;' the two years of foreign travel in which he imbibed all that Italy had to offer of luxuriant culture; his return to England amid the birth-pangs of Puritanism; and the twenty years that followed, in which he sank the ardent literary ambitions of his youth in zeal for what he conceived to be the sacred cause of liberty, striking redoubtable blows right and left against what he regarded as priestcraft and tyranny, while his heart was sorely burdened by domestic troubles, and himself at last visited with the grievous stroke of blindness;—all this manifold discipline brought him nigh to the age of threescore before he could seriously undertake that which had been the enthusiastic passion of his opening manhood. No impartial student of his life and writings would justify all he did or wrote—especially the blind self-love of his arguments for divorce, and the vehemence of his political partisanship; and yet, perhaps, it may be safely said that he

always strove to live in the language of his own sonnet,

"All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-master's eye." *

This sense of duty, inflexible duty, rather than the constraining love of Christ, was the law of his being. And yet deal honestly with him; weigh his life as a whole; take him not at his weaker moments (as you judge not the compass when, violently shaken, the needle vibrates to the right or left, but rather admire with what pertinacity that needle ever struggles back to the pole), and you must confess that that was fulfilled in him of which he wrote in a controversial pamphlet (A.D. 1642) when referring to his early life: "And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion, that *he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem*, that is a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things, not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and practice of that which is praiseworthy." †

Milton *was* himself a true poem before he wrote 'Paradise Lost,' according to the words of St. Paul, "We are His workmanship (*ποίημα*), created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them." ‡ As Joseph by his early training and prophetic dreams, and betrayal by his brethren and cruel imprisonment, was fashioned for the mighty part he had to play on the theatre of Egypt; as Moses by his childhood in Pharaoh's palace, and his studious youth, and his long banishment in Midian, was trained for the leadership of

* Sonnet vii.

† Masson's 'Life of Milton,' vol. i. p. 238.

‡ Eph. ii. 10.

Israel; as Paul by the lore imbibed at Gamaliel's feet, and the fiery conscientiousness of his Pharisaic zeal, was formed and prepared, when the Christ revealed Himself to him in the calm beauty of holiness, to be the foremost standard-bearer in the van of the Church Militant;—so, in his own sphere, was Milton God's workmanship. And this consideration is the more important when we see how Milton's own heart and soul shine through all the principal characters of his poem. Thus Coleridge does not scruple to say, "In the 'Paradise Lost' it is Milton himself whom you see: his Satan, his Adam, his Raphael, and almost his Eve, are all John Milton: the egotism of such a man is a revelation of spirit."*

This intense personality would have overpowered him if it had not been that Milton, with all his burning love of the true and the beautiful, ever reverently bowed before the authority of the Word of God, and ever knelt as a humble suppliant at the footstool of the Throne of grace. His profound reverence for Scripture is transparent in every page of 'Paradise Lost,' and only reflects his deliberate purpose from his youth. "I resolved," he writes, "not to repose on the faith or judgment of others in matters relating to God; but, on the one hand, having taken the grounds of my faith from Divine Revelation alone, and on the other having neglected nothing which depended on my own industry, I thought fit to scrutinize and ascertain for myself the several points of my religious belief by the most careful perusal and meditation of the Holy Scriptures themselves."† This is the fountain from which he drew his poetic inspiration, as when he speaks of the Apocalypse of St. John as

* Coleridge's 'Table Talk,' p. 261.

† Graham's 'Autobiography of Milton,' p. 169.

"the majestic image of a high and stately tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies;" and says that "the frequent songs throughout the law and prophets, not in their divine argument alone, but in the very critical act of composition, may be easily made appear above all the kinds of lyric poetry incomparable."* "These abilities," he continues regarding one who shall treat these themes, "wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God and are of power beside the office of a pulpit to imbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune, to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what He works and what He suffers to be wrought with high providence in His Church."† This was the field in which he loved to indulge what he fondly called "his passion for the good and beautiful," saying of it, "Nor did Ceres, according to the fable, ever seek her daughter Proserpine with such unceasing solicitude as I have sought this idea of the beautiful in all the forms and appearances of things, for many are the shapes of things divine: day and night I am wont to continue my search, and I follow it leading me on with certain assured traces."‡ This irradiated "that inward prompting, which," he says, "now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intense study (which I take to be my position in this life), joined with a strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to after-times as they should not willingly let it die."

* Graham's 'Autobiography of Milton,' pp. 81, 82.

† Ibid. p. 82.

‡ Letter to Diodati, 'Autobiography,' p. 49.

And this he affirms to be "a work not to be raised from the heat of youth or the vapours of wine nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out His seraphim with the hallowed fire of His altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom He pleases." *

And when this patient student of the Scriptures, this ardent lover of the good and beautiful, this humble worshipper at the Throne, was overtaken with blindness, it only seemed to intensify this inner passion of his soul, as breathed in his undying words :

"So much the rather Thou, celestial Light,
Shine inwards, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
Purge and disperse; that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight."

Combining these fragments of his biography, we feel and confess that Milton was himself that true poem which he says every true poet must be; not a faultless poem, but majestic and noble, and at times wonderfully pathetic. His life awes where it does not attract. Calm, conscious of right, constant to himself, enriched with stores of learning, cultured by intercourse with the greatest minds, stirred by no ordinary conflicts which raged round him on every side, in the very front rank of those who believed they were fighting for the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free;—and when,

"Fallen on evil days,
In darkness, and with dangers compass'd round
And solitude,"

* Letter to Diodati, 'Autobiography,' pp. 79, 84.

still in the cloudy and dark day true to his own lofty sonnet:

" Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate one jot
Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
Right onward " *—

Milton ever lives before us as a man of a truly heroical type and mould. "He has been compared," says Hare, "to Raphael: he is much more like Michael Angelo. Michael Angelo is the painter of the Old Testament: Raphael of the New. Now Milton was a Hebrew in soul: he was grand, severe, austere. He wants the gentleness of Christian love, of that feeling to which the least thing is precious as springing from God and claiming kindred with man." † This is generally true; and yet there are times when Milton's tenderness is all the more tender from the pervading tone of majesty. The tears of a strong man move us more than those of a child.

Such was the instrument which God's Spirit had prepared to give 'Paradise Lost' to His Church.

3. And now let me solicit your attention to some features of the work itself. And in considering its influences on our spiritual life, I would venture to assign a foremost place to its inimitable pictures of Eden before the fall. If the innocency of a happy childhood is the golden warp upon which God is wont ordinarily to weave the woof of the noblest manhood; if our hearts vibrate to the lines of Wordsworth—

"There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream; "

* Sonnet xix.

† 'Guesses at Truth,' p. 433.

if glimpses of "that immortal sea that brought us hither" sanctify while they sadden us, surely it is no mean boon to the world to revive the remembrance of that sinless Paradise in which our race was cradled. Dark clouds enough, many of them impenetrably dark, though rainbow-spanned, have shadowed earth since the day when sin entered into the world and death by sin; but it is a priceless possession, the record of which is for ever enshrined in the oracles of truth, to be able to look back on the farthest verge of the horizon, and to see there a streak of holy light, and to know that that light was the daybreak of our creation. And where shall we seek for such pictures as in Milton's poem? It is not only the almost perfect painting of the scenery of Paradise, its walks and woods and waters, its golden days and crystal nights, nor all its wealth of animated innocence, which so attracts us. Milton rises higher. This joy of Eden is the reflection of God's smile. We breathe everywhere the sense of the Divine satisfaction when God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good; and in that sinless garden we seem to catch the echo of the song of the heavenly presbytery, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."* Such walks in Eden tranquillize and harmonize the soul. The intense felicity of creature existence, as there portrayed, is so evidently the will of the Creator, that although, in these visions of 'Paradise Lost,' we are looking not at the things which are seen, but on those which are unseen—for this "happy garden" is no more on earth, and the tree of life blooms now only by the celestial fount of life—we know and are sure that these designs of

* Rev. iv. 11.

omnipotent love shall be at length accomplished in the new heavens and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness; for, while the things seen with all their clouds and conflicts are transient and temporal, the ideals of things unseen in all their purity and peace are imperishable and eternal.

Secondly, next to the beauty of the birthplace of our race, it is the wonderful delineation of human love which so fascinates us in this epic. While it must be granted that Milton's unhappiness in his own home has cast its shadowy film over some of his pictures, seldom, if ever, has the love of man and woman been more truthfully sketched by uninspired pen than in some of the earlier scenes of—

"Our two first parents, yet the only two
Of mankind in the happy garden placed,
Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,
Uninterrupted joy, unrivalled love,
In blissful solitude"—

those two among the other living creatures of whom he writes that they,

"Erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native honour clad,
In naked majesty seem'd lords of all,
And worthy seem'd: for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure,
(Severe, but in true filial freedom placed,)
Whence true authority in men; though both
Not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd;
For contemplation he, and valour form'd;
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace;
He for God only, she for God in him."

And if here Milton dwells rather on woman's natural submission to man, that he does not ignore her true power appears from Adam's words to Raphael regarding his first sight of Eve:

"Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love."—

and of whom he afterwards says :

“ Yet when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best
. . . . And to consummate all,
Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her like a guard angelic placed.”

Nor is this human life dissociated from the Divine. When these two who are “one flesh, one heart, one soul,” poured forth their orisons to God,

“ What prompt eloquence
Flow’d from their lips in prose or numerous verse,
More tuneable than needed lute or harp
To add more sweetness
These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty, Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair. Thyself how wondrous then!
Unspeakable who sitt’st above these heavens
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these Thy lowest works, yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought and power divine.”

Milton’s Adam and Eve dwell in love. And it is no small help to the devout life, so much of which depends on a true recognition of human relationships, to have such a pure and lofty ideal of Paradisiacal perfection engraven on the soul. To gaze on such a model is a gracious preparation for the yet holier teaching of the Gospel: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.”

But I pass on to that harmonious intermingling of angelical with human life which sheds such a peculiar glow over this poem. We owe the conception of angels to the Scriptures. Ancient mythologies tell of countless gods and goddesses, sylphs and nymphs

and fawns, deified men and deified women, but they have all a selfish or local character; and the very conception of holy spiritual creatures, swift as the winds, pure as the light, free of the universe, and burning with love to God and man, is the revelation of the Bible. Martin Luther has nobly said, "An angel's is a fine, tender, kind heart: as if we could find a man who had a heart sweet all through and a gentle will, without subtlety yet of sound reason, at once wise and simple: he who has seen such a heart has colours wherewith he may picture to himself what an angel is." Surely he must himself have had such a heart who could sing,

"Nor think though men were none
That heaven would want spectators, God want praise.
Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen both when we wake and when we sleep:
All these with ceaseless praise His works behold
Both day and night. How often from the steep
Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard
Celestial voices to the midnight air
Sole, or responsive each to other's note,
Singing their great Creator. Oft in bands,
While they keep watch or nightly rounding walk,
With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds
In full harmonic number join'd, their songs
Divide the night and lift our thoughts to heaven."

And in the vigil of Gabriel and his radiant guards over Paradise, and in all the converse of Raphael—"that sociable spirit, that affable archangel"—with our first parents, we have the like felicitous picturings of the love of unfallen spirits towards man, which may be most helpful to us in the devout life. The recoil from Romish superstition and worshipping of angels has been great and grievous. How many among us practically pass thoughtlessly by that ministry of angels of which the Word of God speaks so often and so impressively! Well may we cherish every assistance which revives in our daily recollection the service of

those adoring spirits who, while they minister to us, do always behold the face of our Father in heaven.

4. Thus far we have dwelt rather on Milton's *Paradise* than on his *Paradise Lost*; and we have seen how, alike in his graphic descriptions of Eden and of human love and of angelic sympathy, he has reproduced the revelations of Scripture. But when we come to the loss of Paradise, there is far more ground for debate.

It has been almost universally felt that Satan is the hero of 'Paradise Lost,' and that, despite ourselves, our interest gathers round the fallen Lucifer, who, in his limitable pride, is struggling against illimitable power. Perhaps the greatest effort of poetry in the whole volume—I had nearly said in the English language—is Satan's soliloquy in the opening of the Fourth Book, when, after forcing his way out of Tartarus, and treading the confines of Eden, he argues the reason of his fall:

" 'Warring in heaven against heaven's matchless King.
Ah, wherefore? He deserved no such return
From me, whom He created what I was
In that bright eminence, and with His good
Upbraided none; nor was His service hard.
What could be less than to afford Him praise,
The easiest recompense, and pay Him thanks?
How due! Yet all His good proved ill in me,
And wrought but malice; lifted up so high
I 'sdain'd subjection, and thought one step higher
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
The debt immense of endless gratitude,
So burdensome, still paying, still to owe.' "

All his sophistries and laments, however, only pour oil of vitriol into his wounds, until he exclaims:

" 'Me miserable; which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;

And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep
 Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
 To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven.'"

And then, rejecting the alternative of submission as equally impossible for him to yield as for God to accept, he concludes:—

" 'This knows my Punisher; therefore as far
 From granting He, as I from begging peace :
 All hope excluded thus, behold, instead
 Of us, outcast, exiled, His new delight
 Mankind created, and for him this world.
 So farewell hope; and with hope farewell fear;
 Farewell remorse: all good to me is lost;
 Evil, be thou my good: by thee at least
 Divided empire with heaven's King I hold,
 By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign,
 As man ere long, and this new world shall know.' "

The prevalent tone of the awful picture is that of a created intelligence rebelling and at once crushed by the Creator's almightiness. It is true that angelic free will and the goodness of God are again and again affirmed with earnest iteration. Milton's noble design indisputably was, as he himself describes it,—

"That in the height of this great engagement
 I may assent eternal Providence
 And justify the ways of God to men."

But the scheme of the poem is too strong for the purpose of the poet.

Once admit as a fact underlying the ground-plan of the epic that a created archangel rebelling against the Creator *in another world*, as far removed from us as heaven is from earth, is immediately, without further respite, thrust down to the lowest hell, and, thence emerging, with unconquerable tenacity renews the struggle, and in this struggle tries to seduce man from his allegiance;—and our interest—even though conscience abhors the duplicity of the tempter, condemns his ingratitude, and shudders at the issue of his crime

—our interest, I say, in spite of ourselves and against our sympathy, is engaged in the stupendous conflict. In such a war, when condign punishment has straightway followed insurrection, and against such hopeless odds, when created might is wrestling with Omnipotence, and created wisdom with Omniscience, it is difficult not to admire that unbending indomitable will.* This at least is what two centuries have meant, when they have confessed that Satan is the hero of 'Paradise Lost.' But surely no conclusion could be more disastrous or undesigned. Nor is it a necessary deduction from the facts of the case. We have the same main data in Holy Scripture; but we are never conscious of any admiration of the hosts of darkness or of Satan their prince.

Now here I am deeply persuaded that Milton has failed of his own purpose, because, passing by certain hints which the Word of God supplies, he has laid the scene of Satan's fall in heaven and not on earth; because he has described the war in heaven as taking place before the creation of man instead of after the ascension of our Lord; and because he has confounded the casting down of some few lost angels to hell with the judgment of the last day, which shall consign Satan and all the hosts of darkness for ever to that prison-house of woe.

When first, many years ago, the emphatic words of our Lord, "He (the devil) was a murderer from the beginning (*ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*), and abode not in the truth,"† flashed upon me in their true relation to this subject, they seemed to me to throw a flood of light upon the fall of angels and of men. For the word translated "murderer" is strictly "manslayer," and cannot refer to any seducing of other angels from

* See Birks' 'Difficulties of Belief,' p. 94.

† John viii. 44.

their loyalty. It must describe his fatal assault on man. Now, comparing this central saying of our Lord with the equally emphatic language of St. John, "The devil sinneth from the beginning" (*ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*),* the conclusion appears irresistible that not only was the devil the first sinner, but that the murder of our first parents' innocence was his first *overt act* of rebellion.

This supposition is greatly strengthened by many Scriptures, which describe Satan and his angels as the prince of this world, the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the rulers of the darkness of this world. These titles appear too explicit to be explained of merely usurped dominion. The devil probably distorted a real fact when he tempted our Lord, saying, "All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it." †

If these things are so, it follows that Satan, before his fall, as the archangelic prince of this world, was intrusted with the government and guardianship of our first parents, with whose destiny so many mysterious prophecies were interwoven. Some test of allegiance seems inseparable from creature service. Adam and Eve were probably to Satan what the tree of knowledge was to them. They may have been intrusted to his care with like words of premonitory love. Hence his seduction of them to disobedience was no act of desperate revenge for his own previous consignment to hell, but a foul betrayal of the highest trust conceivable by the foremost archangel of heaven. The noblest responsibilities, affecting God and man, were confided to him; and he proved a traitor to God and a murderer of man. Once grasp this, and all our moral interests and instincts are enlisted against the

* 1 John iii. 8.

† Luke iv. 6.

devil and his despicable meanness, and for man and his rescue from this deadly conspiracy. And now the Son of Man, who emptied Himself of His Divine glory, that in human weakness He might deliver us from this malignant foe, becomes, if I may use the word with deepest reverence, the HERO of the fall and redemption of mankind. All our thoughts cluster around Him, all our admiration, all our love. As to mere power, when the Captain of our salvation forbore the exercise of that Personal Omnipotence which was ever inherent in Him, and leaned as Man upon His Father's arm, the odds, if I may so speak, in immediate collision were all on the side of the hosts of darkness; but the Author and Finisher of the Faith flinched not: Incarnate Goodness triumphed, and we triumph in Him.

I do not question that the war in heaven, described in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, where we read that Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels, has already taken place, a true counterpart in the heavenlies of the conflicts of the Church Militant here on earth. But the whole structure of the Book of Revelation proves that this warfare takes place not before the creation of man, but after the ascension of the Lamb of God to His Father's throne. That this celestial battle should be represented as foughten before the fall of our first parents, dislocates the entire scheme of the Divine dealings with angels so far as revealed to us. Milton has apparently been misled by interpreting the words of St. Peter, that "God spared not angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;"* and the like words of St. Jude, that "angels which

* 2 Pet. ii. 4.

kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day,"* as if they embraced all the fallen principalities and powers, whereas the absence of the article before angels in both Scriptures leaves it quite open to us to explain this of some among the lost spirits, who, as it seems, for a heinous outbreak of hellish lust, were thus visited with wrath before their fellows. This hypothesis fully harmonizes these passages of Holy Writ with those which tell of Satan going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it, and of our wrestling day by day against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies.† But, at the same time, it reverses the whole picture which Milton sketches of the fall of angels. Satan and his countless hosts (with the exception of those among them of whom St. Peter and St. Jude speak) have not yet been thrust down to hell. They have been cast out of the highest heaven: they have probably been dispossessed of vast super-terrestrial regions: they have been cast down to the earth: they have great wrath because they know that their time is short. Instead of staggering at the immediate vindication of the Divine justice, we can only marvel at that wondrous forbearance of God which has permitted them so long a respite before their final and irreversible doom. Truly said Augustine, "Aeternus est, tardat, longanimitas est."‡

I need not linger to remind you how immediate is the bearing of this on that spiritual life which we live before God. We are not only ministered unto by spirits of light, but we are opposed every step of our march Zionward by the hosts of darkness. We are

* Jude 6.

† Job i. 7; Ephes. vi. 12.

‡ St. Aug. in Psal. xci. 6.

in the stress of the battle. The great enemy received a mortal wound when the Son of Man died for man upon the cross; but he and his associates have never yet been driven from the field. He has never yet known the avenging flames of hell. We must overcome him as our brethren overcame him, by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony; and we must be prepared, if need so require, not to love our lives unto the death.

5. I have ventured to suggest these corrections to the general structure of Milton's scheme of the loss of Paradise. But if we see reason to accept them, and I believe they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture, to which time alone forbids me to refer, this needs not prevent our finding solid instruction and intense delight from many of the separate pictures and details of this marvellous poem of the Fall. It is no mean advantage for us, who are living amid things seen, to be brought so vividly face to face with things unseen. In that world, to which Milton introduces us, we walk by faith and not by sight. The drapery only is figurative: the substance is real. Such or such like things must have taken place in the course of God's dealing with His intelligent creation. The mighty drama of Providence overarches and overshadows our personal walk with God. We cannot isolate ourselves if we would. "I" am only an individual in a very limited sense of the word. What God has been and is and will be to all angels and all men touches at a thousand points what He has been and is and will be to *me*. Alike in the unfathomable depths of His judgments as in the boundless heaven of His grace, so far as revealed in the mirror of His word, I see the lineaments of my God. But I will trust Him where I cannot trace Him. I am going to

my Father's house. And there I shall know even as also I am known.

Two great epics "enriched the blood of the world" in the seventeenth century. Surely it was no undesigned coincidence of gifts that, while God's Spirit, so humbly besought by Milton, was enabling him to paint the magnificent panorama of 'Paradise Lost,' that same Spirit was moving the humble prisoner in Bedford jail to write that 'Pilgrim's Progress' to which your thoughts will be directed next Sunday afternoon. But in truth we need not contrast them as rivals. They do not clash, but intimately blend. If I may venture to quote a sonnet I once wrote on Bunyan—

God sent His minstrel among men to sing
 The wayfarer's home-journey. So he laid
 His hand upon his rustic harp, and made
 Such music sweet beyond imagining
 That angels paused to listen on the wing;
 But the dull laggard world, the while he play'd,
 Hearing the marvel heard not, and essay'd
 To quench his voice. Fools, fools! the obedient string
 Woke at his touch such wondrous melodies
 From the celestial city floating down
 That now they vibrate upon every breeze
 Which blows o'er land and ocean, on and on
 Flowing and gathering strength,—a ceaseless chime
 Until eternity has shadow'd time.

'Paradise Lost' and 'Pilgrim's Progress' were given almost simultaneously to the Church of God. Each of them has done its work, and been inwrought into the very texture of the English mind. How often has some pictured story from Milton's Eden, or Bunyan's Pilgrimage, come, like a breeze from the everlasting hills, to those who confess that they are strangers here, and that their citizen life is in heaven?

Never were such assistances more needed than at the present day. Things seen and temporal are pressing with accumulated force, as the end draws nearer. The

discoveries of science are multiplied every hour. In their bewilderment among the riches of creation, those who are loosed from the moorings of the Christian faith forget, if they do not deny, their Creator. The world refuses to believe that its history is approaching its supreme and final crisis before the judgment-seat of Christ. And yet all the while the human heart, made for God, is disquieted and ill at ease without God. Unrest, an ever deepening unrest, is alike the penalty of man's sin and the tribute to his lofty original. And there are those who are crying for the light, though no ear but that of God may interpret the inarticulate longings of their soul.

If, then, to such the primeval Paradise with its holy innocence and human love can be so set forth as to live before the mind's eye; if the dark power of hell can be so portrayed as in sad earnest to be feared; if the fall with its far-reaching issues be accepted as the earliest fact in the history of our race; if the ministry of angels and the hostility of devils are felt to be solemn realities with which we have to do; and if now the first gospel, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," arrests the unsealed spiritual ear;—things unseen and eternal begin to assume their due and rightful position. Man asks, Whence came I? what am I? whither am I going? It flashes upon the conscience that "the soul that sinneth it shall die." And if the Spirit of God be working in that human spirit, never will the heart rest until the most momentous question, which can engross the anxieties of a fallen being, is asked at the footstool of the Throne, "What must I do to be saved?" and the answer is heard from the lips of Incarnate Truth, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth

in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Things unseen and eternal centre around the Cross.

In this way I doubt not that Milton's poem has been used of God to prepare the entrance of many souls upon a devout life. But for those of you, men and brethren, who have long ere this entered the wicket-gate and set your faces Zionward, this epic will never lose its interest and its power, for it treats of those things among which you daily walk by faith; it often awakens in your heart the sublime prayer of Moses, "If I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way that I may know Thee;" it helps you to realize many conceptions which but for this would have been only like cloud-shadows in your soul; and as you turn with fond regret from the closed gates of 'Paradise Lost,' it points you onward to that Paradise city which shines in undeclying day, for the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

THE 'PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.'

Disadvantages in preaching on a familiar subject; compensating advantages; the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is common ground: to the young and the old; to the uneducated and the educated; to Dissenters and Church-people; it is a great gift from Nonconformity to the Church of England; peculiar form of the work: an Allegory and a Dream; humour of the 'Pilgrim's Progress'; its originality; the fruit of Bunyan's experience; reminiscences of his life at Bedford and Elstow; his autobiography; his sufferings and strong convictions; separate personality in true religion; all alike in need of conversion; recognition of God's different mode of dealing with different souls; searching analysis of self-deception; direct power of the Bible over the human heart; enforcement of the necessity of Christian watchfulness; and of careful listening to the voice of Conscience; contrast with the religion of emotion; contrast with the religion of ceremony; defects in the 'Pilgrim's Progress'; omission of the Visible Church; scanty reference to the Holy Spirit; and to the Eucharist; inculcation of practical beneficence; the women of the 'Pilgrim's Progress.'

"Behold, this Dreamer cometh!"

A PREACHER, appointed for a special occasion, when approaching such a subject as that which is committed to me to-day, naturally begins by asking himself whether it is an advantage to him, or a disadvantage, that his subject is familiar and commonplace.

In this circumstance he is clearly placed, in some degree, at a disadvantage. He has none of that help of novelty, by means of which he might hope to attract the attention of his hearers—he can tell them very little that they have not learnt before; his sermon cannot profess to be a guide to them in studying a book which to him is well known, while to them

it is comparatively unknown, but is rather an invitation to them to travel with him along a path which has often been trodden already.

Yet, on the other hand, there are advantages in this position. The preacher and his hearers are from the first on common ground. He has no ignorance to remove—no obscurities to clear away—no prudent limitation to lay down—no preliminary caution to suggest—he has no prejudices to conciliate (or if there be prejudice in some minds against the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' this is quite counterbalanced by its general popularity)—the preacher has no explanations to give—no ground to define—he takes the book as he finds it, and as the English people at large, old and young, educated and rude, Dissenter and Church-people, zealous and indifferent, have known it and found delight in it, and loved it, for two hundred years. '

This broad general interest that is felt in the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is one of the characteristics of our subject on which it is desirable to dwell. This book is common ground for the whole human family. It is a link, in the first place, as I have just remarked, between the old and the young. While children are entertained with it, and read it with eager pleasure and curiosity, the aged never lose their sense of its solemn beauty. Those who, after a long pilgrimage, are consciously approaching the river over which there is no bridge, and have gained some varied experience of self-deception in their own hearts, are not likely to set a lower value than before on the deep and manifold meaning of this allegory; while children are enchanted with it at a very early age, read it as if it were a literal history, picture to themselves each scene, work out each part of the road from the lanes and hills with which they are familiar near their

own homes, tremble with *Christian* in his moments of danger, clap their hands when Mr. Greatheart wins a victory. Children are familiar with all parts of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' before they know very distinctly that it has any religious meaning at all; and thus their minds are ready for all its instruction when the experience of life gives to that meaning a serious reality. So true is it that this poem is a happy and wholesome link between the old and the young. Moreover, any book that wins its way easily to the minds and hearts of the young is sure to possess a permanent charm for the old.

And, again, this book is common ground for persons of the highest education, and for those whom we commonly term the working classes. With many books that are precious 'Companions for the Devout Life' this could not possibly be the case. I think, for instance, it would be difficult to imagine the *Christian Year* ever becoming a volume of familiar use in the cottage-homes of the poor. It may be that, as education advances, those sacred songs of the Church may strike down into soil prepared for them. But at least a doubt on this point is not unreasonable. Concerning the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' there is no question of its power to rise upwards, and to secure its triumph as it rises, from the homely ground on which first it came into being. On that homely ground it still holds its sway undisputed. The language is that of the common people still. In the 'Pilgrim's Progress' are choice bits of old English which linger yet in country places, while they have disappeared from the fashionable circles of society. It is full of proverbial sayings which sum up the sagacity and wisdom of unlettered men. Its characters have their counterparts in every town and village. If children identify the outward scenes of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' with familiar places

in the country lanes round their homes, the labouring people identify its characters with bad people and good people and odd people they have met at market. Mr. Talkative and Mr. Facing-both-ways are well known in every neighbourhood; Old Honest, too, is well known and much respected in some. And yet there is a good and correct taste in this book, and a refined and tender feeling, which recommend it to the most highly cultivated and the most fastidious. Lord Macaulay has said that during the century which followed his death, Bunyan's fame, though great, was "almost entirely confined to religious families of the middle and lower classes;" that "till a recent period all the numerous editions of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' were evidently meant for the cottage and the servants' hall." He adds that, "in general, when the educated minority and the common people differ about the merit of a book, the opinion of the educated minority finally prevails; the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is, perhaps, the only book about which, after the lapse of a hundred years, the educated minority have come over to the opinion of the common people."* I presume that this statement of facts and this criticism are correct. It may, therefore, be said of Bunyan, as it was said of John the Baptist, that he was "in the deserts until the day of his shewing unto Israel."† But now that he has been "shewn" and recognized for what he is, he is a living bond of union among the devout, and even the un-devout, of all classes of mankind.

But, again, in another sense, and a more serious sense, the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is a bond that unites us. This book is common ground to Church-people and Nonconformists. It links us who are within the Church

* 'Biographies,' by Lord Macaulay, pp. 47, 48.

† St. Luke i. 80.

of England with all the religious life which surrounds us on the outside. This certainly could not have been the case with the 'Christian Year,' though, as I may remark in passing, I have observed that in Scotland a high value is set by the Puritan mind on Keble's poems. Here in England this could hardly be. But the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is what I have described it to be in reference alike to those within and without our Anglican boundary. No sharp lines of ecclesiastical demarcation are to be traced in the histories of *Christian* and *Christiana*. There is none of that visible separation here, which is stereotyped in the duplicate chapels of our cemeteries, as though, after lives unlovely, we were even in our deaths to be divided. No one could ascertain, I think, from any part of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' that its author was a Baptist. The question, indeed, of infant or adult baptism was not an essential matter in the congregation to which John Bunyan belonged at Bedford, as even now it is not an essential matter in the congregation which lives on continuously in the same spot. But is it not remarkable that Bunyan himself, writing in a time of hot controversy, should have so easily laid aside what would have spoilt the book for universal acceptance? That he did so is a reason for great rejoicing. This is certainly not a time when we can afford to make little of any healthy and thoroughly religious bond of union between Nonconformists and ourselves. We are all too apt to settle down upon our own ecclesiastical ground, and to view all other ground outside as hostile; and we forget that over us all alike there is a Biblical atmosphere, in which we breathe our best religious life. It is in making much of this general Biblical atmosphere that we are best able to see the real value of our divisions; and certainly, for charity and mutual forbearance in regard to such matters, the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is one of our best instructors.

I will go even further than this. I venture to add that it is good for the world—good, at least, for ourselves—that the 'Pilgrim's Progress' was written not by a Churchman, but by a Nonconformist. This fact ought to stop some of those harsh words which we are liable to use towards those who are ecclesiastically separated from us. The 'Pilgrim's Progress' is a returning of good for evil: and in that it is a blessing received by us from the Nonconformists, it must be a blessing to those who gave it; for it is ever "more blessed to give than to receive." To John Bunyan hard measure was dealt out by the combined authorities of Church and State; and this poem is the fruit of his imprisonment. There was, indeed, no monopoly of persecution in the seventeenth century. I do not forget that there is such a book as Walker's 'Sufferings of the Clergy.' The Presbyterians, too, were cruel to Bunyan. Still I think the benediction we receive from this volume ought to be a rebuke to those who so freely use the word "Puritan" as a term of reproach. I should wish to think of our author as I think of St. Paul when, writing from prison at Rome he affixes his autograph to the Epistle to the Colossians, and the chain clanks on his wrist as he writes: "The salutation by the hand of me Paul: remember my bonds: grace be with you."*

Now, in endeavouring to estimate more in detail the characteristic benefits which we derive from this book (and specially in reference to our own day), I think we ought to pause for a moment upon the form of the book, which has both its advantages and its disadvantages. It is both an Allegory and a Dream. Thus it stands out apart from all the other devotional classics which have formed here the subjects of sermons either

* Col. iv. 18.

last year or this. In Baxter's 'Saints' Rest,' in Taylor's 'Holy Living,' in Bishop Andrewes' 'Devotions,' in St. François de Sales, in Fénelon, in Pascal, there is great variety of method in treating of the spiritual welfare of the soul, but in none of them do we find these two remarkable features.

As an Allegory, the 'Pilgrim's Progress' has all the charm of a succession of parables, and in this respect it follows the Divine pattern. An allegory, indeed, is different from a parable, as we may observe immediately by remembering that in this case Interpreter himself is one of the personages in the story. It is not a sacred fable, the meaning of which must be given separately, but the similitude and the explanation travel on together. Still there is this charm in common to Bunyan's allegory and to a series of parables, that, as we read, it is as if riddles were perpetually asked, and then promptly answered. At every step there is something new to excite and to satisfy curiosity. The reader is made to feel as if he were teaching himself all the time. At each moment there is some start of surprise, like the sparkle of a jewel when we least expect to see it—like a new flower in the hedgerow as we pass—like the sudden laugh of a child unseen. We must not here forget the humour of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' as, for instance, when we read that Worldly Wiseman "always went to the town of Morality to church;" or, again, when *Christian* said to Apollyon, "I was born, indeed, in your dominions; but your service was hard, and your wages such as a man could not live on, for the wages of sin is death;" or, once more, when By-ends tells us that "his Great-Grandfather was a Waterman, looking one way and rowing another." This touch of the grotesque would hardly be allowable, or, at least, it would distract our feelings of reverence in a deeply devotional book under any other form; but

here it is a real help for the bringing of useful lessons home to the common conscience.

As regards the adoption of the form of a Dream, this only need be said, that it enables the author skilfully to overcome many difficulties, which in such a composition arise from the nature of the case. He can wake when he likes, and thus he need not pursue any part of the story to an inconvenient length; and he can dream again, and so keep up the general effect of the onward progress of the pilgrim. "Behold, this Dreamer cometh!" It is a benefit to us that, among those who instruct us in the spiritual life, Bunyan comes to us in this fashion. He would not have instructed us so well unless, besides being the best master of allegory, he had likewise been the prince of dreamers.

We touch here the question of the originality of the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' This is not the place for any general discussion of this subject, and under any circumstances it would be a trivial inquiry. There cannot be any doubt of the originality of this famous work. He tells us this himself; and we cannot question his word. As to the existence of earlier books in which something of the same mode of treating spiritual things is found, it would not be much to the purpose if some suggestive volume were in the Library of the Escorial, when Bunyan was in Bedford Jail.*

* 'Desiderius: Dialogus verè pius, et cum primis jucundus de expeditâ ad Dei Amorem viâ,' is the title of a Latin translation from the Spanish, published at Cologne in 1617. We cannot imagine that Bunyan ever saw it; and if he had seen it he could not have read it. It is, however, very interesting, both for resemblance and for contrast, to compare it, with the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' For instance, Desiderius, journeying in search of

the Supreme Wisdom, approaches the House of Humility. His dog is with him, for companionship and amusement. Outside the gate of the House is a damsel with fair apparel, who trembles at the dog. Desiderius reassures her, and ascertains that her name is Vain Glory. He is admitted by a grave and reverend person, whose name is The Fear of God; but Vain Glory remains outside.

He could not borrow from that which he had never seen. And even if some hint had been supplied by a book or a manuscript which he had seen, or by words which may have fallen on his ear in conversation, this would not detract from the originality of this great work of genius.* This question, however, though on a mere literary view it cannot reasonably be raised, is from another point of view, and for us on this present occasion, of the utmost importance. The characteristic force and extreme value of the book depend, in a great measure, upon its intense originality.

The 'Pilgrim's Progress' is the poetical result of the experience of the man who wrote it. It is Bunyan himself transfused into an allegory. We become aware of this when we study that strange chapter of autobiography, which he himself published under the title of 'Grace abounding to the Worst of Sinners;' and becoming aware of this, we can (at least, so it seems to me) trace, even in the accidental and superficial features of the book, reminiscences of the experience of his life.

Fresh from a visit to Bedford and Elstow, I find some thoughts of this kind strongly impressed upon me.

* An allegory, named by Southey in his 'Life of John Bunyan' as one in which a general resemblance has been observed, is the '*Pèlerin de la Vie Humaine*,' composed by a monk named Guillaume de Guilleville in the early part of the fourteenth century. An old English version of this 'Pilgrimage' was printed for the Roxburghe Club in 1869. There is also a condensed English version of it in manuscript, written much later, which is in the University Library at Cambridge, and which I have been permitted to see there. It has been suggested that a little volume

of this kind may possibly have been seen by Bunyan; and in this case, too, a comparison is interesting, though the contrast is very marked. The author relates the dream that came to him "in religion" at his abbey. He thought himself a pilgrim, "stirred to go to the city of Jerusalem in a mirror;" and the correlative of "Evangelist" in this case is a beautiful lady named "*Grâce Dieu*," who tells the pilgrim he will often have need of her before he is fully come to the city which he has seen in his vision.

Whether they have occurred to others or not, I do not know. That is a curious though beautiful fancy, in the description of the entrance of *Christian* and *Hopeful* into the Heavenly City, which is expressed thus: "Then I heard in my Dream that all the bells in the city rung for joy." Yet it seems to us at once quite natural, when we remember Bunyan's early passion for bell-ringing; and most natural it appears to those who have seen the very bells in the ringing of which he took a part. And opposite to that detached church tower of Elstow is the broad village green, where he used to dance as a young man. It is difficult to believe that those old amusements (though he blamed himself for them) were not in his mind, when he describes in the following manner the rejoicings which took place at the killing of Giant Despair: "So Ready-to-Halt took Despondency's daughter, named Much-Afraid, by the hand, and to dancing they went in the road. True, he could not dance without one crutch in his hand: but, I promise you, he footed it well; also the girl was to be commended, for she answered the music handsomely." And, to name one thing more, there is at the west end of the church of Elstow, now hid by a tree, but very conspicuous when Bunyan was young, a *wicket-gate* in the true literal sense of the word.* However this may be, there are certainly round Elstow the level fields in which Bunyan himself went to meditate, as he describes *Christian* meditating, in deep distress of mind; and certainly the broad slow-moving Ouse at Bedford must be the river which was before the eye of his imagination, when he wrote, "Then they asked the men, if the waters were all of a depth. They said No: yet they could not help them in that case, for, said they, you shall find it deeper or shallower, as you

* *I. e.*, a small door or gate within a larger one.

believe in the King of the place." It is difficult, in the neighbourhood of Bunyan's early days, to fix upon anything in the landscape that can have suggested to him certain parts of the ground over which *Christian* and *Christiana* journeyed; but we must remember that during those days he travelled on foot in the exercise of his trade, and must have marked many landscapes which were in his memory when he wrote, and which furnished to him various scenes of the pilgrimage. The Valley of Humiliation may be seen in many parts of England; and many are the tracts of high ground, which are truly the Delectable Mountains, with air sweet and pleasant, and with far-reaching views on every side.

But leaving these outward things, which have indeed their value, as tending to fix in our minds the intense reality of this work, and to augment our loving interest, both in the man and his book, let us now look deeper. It is in the spiritual inward experience of Bunyan, his terrible and prolonged struggles with dreadful doubts, his strange alternations of despondency and joy—it is here that we find both the secret of the existence of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and the secret of its power. We cannot place it side by side with the narrative contained in 'Grace abounding' without perceiving that though it was the genius of Bunyan which built this wonderful structure, his personal experience was the quarry from which he hewed the stones. To those who are acquainted with that autobiography it is needful only to quote a few sentences that occur in the account of the passage through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. "*Christian* must needs go through it," says the author, "because the way to the Celestial City lay through the midst of it. Now this Valley is a very solitary place. . . . Over it hang the discouraging clouds of confusion: death also doth always

spread his wings over it; in a word, it is every whit dreadful, being utterly without Order. . . . The pathway was here so dark, that oftentimes when he lift up his foot to set forward, he knew not where, or upon what he should set it next. . . . Also he heard doleful voices, and rushings to and fro . . . and these dreadful noises were heard by him for several miles together. . . . I took notice that now poor *Christian* was so confounded, that he did not know his own voice; and thus I perceived it: Just when he was come over against the mouth of the burning Pit, one of the wicked ones got behind him, and whisperingly suggested many grievous blasphemies to him, which he verily thought had proceeded from his own mind. This put *Christian* more to it than anything that he met with before—even to think that he should now blaspheme Him that he loved so much.” This is almost a literal picture of the mental and moral conflict through which Bunyan passed in the streets of Bedford and in the fields round Elstow. It is often said that his sufferings at that period were in fact, insanity. And this, in a certain sense, may be true. Genius and madness are sometimes divided by a very slender line. And here, in the ‘Pilgrim’s Progress,’ he is taking a sane view of his insane experience, and this for our benefit, and the benefit of all future generations. He had been under Divine teaching all the while, that he might become our teacher. We may say of him, as St. Paul said of himself: “Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.”* The men who have done great good in the world are those in whom a strong personal experience has given a character to their life. The cause which began to send this new current through their souls may have

* 2 Cor. v. 13.

been trivial, and, so to speak, accidental; but the current became strong, and the work was done. Clarkson, who came from the same level region of England, gained a prize at Cambridge for an Essay on Slavery; and an enthusiasm, suggested by his own arguments, filled his life. Howard, from the very town of Bedford itself, called to visit prisons, and among others, that very prison in which Bunyan was confined (and one grim door of which still exists), became the reformer of prison-life.* Bunyan did the same work in a spiritual sense, because he was mastered and possessed by a strong conviction. And not only so. He was conscious of the call. It is made clear, in his autobiography, that he desired to render his own experience a benefit to others. He had suffered that they might have relief. His was a share of the office which our Lord assigned to St. Peter. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have *you*, that he may sift *you* as wheat; but I have prayed for *thee*, that *thy* faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."†

This intense earnestness of personal conviction, coupled with large experience of the dealings of God with the soul, and with wide and affectionate human sympathy, results in two characteristics of the book, both of which are very strongly marked, though at first sight they seem inconsistent with each other.

Bunyan, in his 'Pilgrim's Progress,' singles out the individual, sets him face to face with his conscience,

* It must, I believe, be accepted as a fact that the jail in which Bunyan was imprisoned was not that which used to stand on the bridge over the Ouse, but one in another part of the town.

† Luke xxii. 31. These words are often so read as to obscure the fact that St. Peter is addressed in the singular, and the disciples re-

ferred to in the plural. Thus the characteristic lesson of the passage is lost. The words of Christ in this place were used in Rome as a conspicuous motto during the Vatican Council. But the true primacy of St. Peter is the privilege of every Christian who, having been *converted*, is able to *strengthen* his brethren.

makes him aware of his sin, crushes him with a sense of danger, leads him on to hope through isolated conscious acquaintance with the Cross, separates him off from all other men in his encouragements and his fears, and conducts him along a path which he must tread for himself amid many difficulties. The religion with which we have here to deal is altogether a personal religion. It is quite different from that sort of collective religiousness, if we may so speak, in the midst of which a man, in his own opinion, and in the opinion of others, passes current for a true Christian, because all around him is very decent and orderly. Bunyan's pilgrim is violently shaken out of this mistake. Every man must be converted—separately converted—or he cannot be saved. I said above that the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is in more senses than one a book for all men; and this is true in one sense further (and a very important sense), besides those which I named. In this presentation of Christianity there are no "Counsels of Perfection." What is true of one is true of all. Whether Bunyan holds rightly or wrongly the balance of Divine truth, whether he is wise or unwise in the application of that truth, his directions are meant for each human soul on its way to Heaven. Herein this book differs very much from some books of devotion of the Roman Catholic type—or rather I would say, from that Roman Catholic system (a system not very remote from us just now) which makes great demands upon the enthusiastic and fanatical, and gives easy terms to the worldly and indifferent.

But now mark in the 'Pilgrim's Progress' a totally different characteristic, though one not inconsistent with the former. There is not one stereotyped form of religious experience for all pilgrims; but, on the contrary, this experience admits of the utmost variety. Bunyan is very broad and sympathetic in his apprecia-

tion of differences of human temperament, and very wise and reverent in his recognition of God's diverse modes of dealing with separate souls. Feeblemind was carried up the Hill Difficulty, where *Christian* nearly lost his hope. Faithful found the lions asleep, at the mere sight of which (not knowing that they were chained) *Christian* was terrified. *Christiana* was never in Doubting Castle at all. It is most instructive thus to compare the variations of incident which mark the steps of the different pilgrims that come before us in the narrative or in the dialogues; and herein consists one great advantage in the addition of the second part of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' to the first.

And while we have before us this general subject of Bunyan's large sympathy with varieties of human character and human necessity, face to face with God's infinite variety in dealing with our wants as they arise, let us mark his wonderful skill in tracing out subtle forms of self-deception. This appears especially in the dialogues. In this respect Bunyan is like Shakespeare. He is equal to the great casuists in his power of drawing fine distinctions; while he is better than they, in that a genial pure stream of manly honesty is poured over all his discussions on such subjects, so as to render them wholesome. And this is to be added, that casuistry in the concrete is apt to be more healthy and instructive than casuistry in the abstract.

It is the manner of the Bible to present such subjects rather by the exhibition of character than in a didactic form; and this leads me to a remark on the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' which is obviously true, indeed, but of high importance. This poem is an argument for the direct unassisted power of the Bible on the human soul, when that sacred book is studied with affection, reverence, and perseverance. This, too, is a part of Bunyan's experience. The Bible may be said to have been his one

book. One or two religious treatises, indeed, were in his cottage among his small possessions at his marriage. A romance, read in earlier life, may perhaps have coloured his train of thought. We know, from his manuscript notes in a still existing copy of Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,' that that book was diligently read by him. But the Bible was the food of his soul. His life was a proof of the power of the Bible. And what he was in himself he has communicated to his great poem. Not only is there a wholesome Biblical complexion over the whole of it, but the Holy Scripture is interwoven into its texture throughout. The Written Word is everywhere. He distrusts the Inner Light, unless it can justify itself by the Written Word. We can trace here, I think, his extreme dislike to the system of the Quakers. But without entering into any controversy on this point, we may truly say that the testimony of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' to the living and direct power of Scripture is one great and permanent benefit of the book. There is a wonderful charm in the manner in which the Bible meets us here at every turn, and a wonderful instructiveness. Sometimes, indeed, its passages are applied in senses they were never intended to bear; and we smile as we read; but even such unexpected gilding on the edge of sentences is harmless and beautiful; and the general weight of the Bible teaching as given through the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is a true blessing to the English people.

If, now, I were to single out one feature of the ethical teaching of this book, for the conduct of the Christian life, I should, without hesitation, say, that it is the inculcation of watchful and wary walking at every step. This admonition is ever present and conspicuous throughout, from the beginning to the end, and alike in both parts of the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' At no moment can the pilgrim safely relax his vigilance. Each portion of

his path has its peculiar danger. Temptation is never long absent. Enemies are close at hand, or snares are in the way, though they may not be seen; and the heart within is ever deceitful. I need not quote illustrations. They occur in all varieties of form, at almost every page. We remember what Evangelist said to *Christian* on the occasion of his first deviation from the guidance that had been given to him: "Did not I direct thee the way to the little wicket-gate? How is it that thou art so quickly turned aside, for thou art now out of the way?" and what Goodwill said to him, after the wicket-gate was safely entered, and he was proceeding to address himself to his journey: "Look before thee. Dost thou see this narrow way? That is the way thou must go. It was cast up by the Patriarchs, Prophets, Christ, His Apostles, and it is as straight as a rule can make it; this is the way thou must go." How solemn the admonition which he carried away from the Interpreter's house, where he had discoursed with the man in the Iron Cage: "'Once I was, as I thought, fair for the Celestial City, and had even joy at the thought that I should get thither.'—'But how camest thou in this condition?'—'I left off to watch and be sober; I have grieved the Spirit, and He is gone.'" How deep the humiliation, when he has lost his roll through sleeping, and now returns, if haply he may find that which had already been "so many times his comfort in his journey." "Thus therefore he now went on bewailing his sinful sleep, saying: 'O wretched man that I am, that I should sleep in the daytime! that I should sleep in the midst of difficulty!'" And from this let us turn to that which is written, with marvellous wisdom, near the very close of the second part. "By this time they were got to the Enchanted Ground, where the air naturally tended to make one drowsy. This Enchanted Ground is one of

the last refuges that the enemy to Pilgrims has; wherefore it is as, you see, placed almost at the end of the way, and so it standeth against us with the more advantage. For when, thinks the enemy, will these fools be so desirous to sit down, as when they are weary; and when so like for to be weary, as when almost at their journey's end?"

This notice of what I regard as the most characteristic part of the ethical teaching of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' leads me to point out (what in fact is the same thing in another form) that Bunyan's religious system enjoins the most tender, watchful, anxious regard to the voice of Conscience; but instead of quoting here from the book before us, I will bring forward an illustrative passage from one of his shorter treatises. In 'Paul's Departure and Crown,' I find the following: "Wouldst thou be faithful to do that work that God hath appointed thee to do in this world for His name? then make much of a trembling heart and conscience; for though the Word be the line and rule whereby we must order and govern all our actions, yet a breaking heart and tender conscience is of absolute necessity for our so doing. A hard heart can do nothing with the Word of Jesus Christ. Keep then thy conscience awake with wrath and grace, with heaven and hell; but let grace and heaven bear sway. Paul made much of a tender conscience; else he had never done as he did, nor suffered what we read of. 'And herein,' saith he, 'do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.'"

We see how seriously opposed all this is to two modes of religion, from which, if I am not much mistaken, we have much harm to apprehend in this present time.

It is opposed to that religion of mere emotion, which expresses itself thus: "Only believe, and all shall be well." In one sense indeed such words are true; for

real faith carries with it the necessary result of holiness : the fruit is in the seed. Yet this is not the only or the customary way in which John Bunyan presents this matter to us. I am very far from saying that those who almost limit themselves to the use of this language, do not hold also what he held. Still there is a danger in this mode of teaching ; and in our own day we have been made seriously aware of it. And the 'Pilgrim's Progress' offers a caution which is salutary, and which ought to be acceptable ; for nowhere is the doctrine of Free Justification more explicitly taught.

And, on the other hand, it is opposed to the religion which finds its support and strength in ceremony. Again I am far from saying that those who lay stress on the outward are necessarily neglectful of the inward. On the contrary, I joyfully acknowledge that those who press upon us very urgently the external forms of religion are sometimes most diligent and direct in promoting the personal spiritual life. Still I am persuaded that our peril is great in the presence of an aspect of Christianity which is sure to be fashionable—expressing itself, as it does, in church-building and cathedral-restoration, and in manifold forms that are pleasing and attractive, and such as offer repose and satisfaction in outward things that fill the mind with interest, without really changing the heart. It may be doubted whether Christianity, in its most fashionable forms, will ever have great transforming power over the individual soul. The 'Pilgrim's Progress,' then, comes to us here with benefit in its homely severity. It is a protest against the combination of busy religious observances with thorough worldliness of life ; and it tells us that it is no part of our appointed task to scatter roses on the way to Heaven.

Doubtless there are defects in the 'Pilgrim's Progress': or, at least, it does not teach us everything that relates

to the conduct of the spiritual life. Thus, as we read it, we seem to feel the want of that which we enunciate, when we say, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." I am not here referring to any ecclesiastical theory and system; but simply to that which is involved in the corporate union of a Visible Church—to the advantage of being united in the use of common ordinances—to the strength we gain by working together as the conscious parts of an organic whole—and to our feeling towards our children, whom, as being baptized, we are in the habit of teaching as though there were something in them, which, by God's grace, we might elicit. Thus perhaps it may be said with truth that the 'Pilgrim's Progress' does not quite fit in symmetrically with all parts of the Apostles' Creed. And yet to such a criticism let me be allowed to say something in reply. Whatever may be true in regard to the Apostles' Creed, the 'Pilgrim's Progress' fits in admirably with the Lord's Prayer. Few things, in fact, would be more edifying than a commentary on the Lord's Prayer compiled from the various parts of this wonderful allegory.

There is another defect, which seems to me still more serious. In the 'Pilgrim's Progress' hardly any reference occurs to the perpetual presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the heart of the believer as the source of light and life, of comfort and strength. There is indeed one sentence, and a golden sentence, at the moment of *Christian's* leaving the Interpreter's house, which ought not to be overlooked. "Then said the Interpreter, 'The Comforter be always with thee, good *Christian*, to guide thee in the way that leads to the city.'" It might be said that this sentence involves everything. It might be added that there would have been a difficulty in introducing into this allegory any frequent mention of the Holy Spirit; and further, that

in Bunyan's 'Holy War,' and others of his writings, we find that which compensates for this omission.* Still the omission should be observed, lest in drawing instructions from the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' we forget that which is not only the Great Promise of our Saviour, but His Great Promise fulfilled. I imagine it may be accounted for partly from that dislike to the system of the Quakers which has been mentioned above. Bunyan dreaded lest the Inner Light should usurp the place of the Written Word. Yet, look at it as we will, the omission is remarkable: for that very Biblical character of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' on which stress has been laid above, would lead us to expect that its arrangement of Divine truth would be presented according to the analogy of the New Testament: and nothing is more conspicuous there, in regard to the time that succeeded the Ascension, than its perpetual reference to the Holy

* In the 'Holy War,' after the renewing of the charter of the City of Mansoul, a ministry is established among the people, that they may be "documented" in all good and wholesome things. Of the two ministers who are thus established by the Prince among them "one is of his Father's Court, and one a native of Mansoul." The latter is "that old Gentleman, Mr. Conscience by name." Here we have illustrations of what was said above of the emphasis laid by Bunyan on the Bible, and on obedience to Conscience. Concerning the other minister, the Prince says, "He that is from the Court is a person of no less dignity and quality than my Father and I, and he is the Lord Chief Secretary of my Father's house: for he is, and always has been, the chief dictator of all my Father's laws . . . This is he that must be your

chief teacher; for it is he, and he only, that can teach you clearly in all high and supernatural things . . . This person can put life and vigour into all he says, yea, and can put it also into all your hearts . . . Take heed that you do not grieve this minister; for if you do, he may fight against you." Passages in other works of Bunyan, in which the pre-eminence assigned to the Holy Spirit is evident, are such as the following:—"There is no man nor church in the world that can come to God in prayer, but by the assistance of the Holy Spirit." (Offor. i. p. 627.) "It is necessary that you know these three things distinctly—to wit, the grace of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the grace of the Holy Ghost: for it is not the grace of one, but of all these three, that saveth him that shall be saved indeed" (p. 347).

Ghost. Such references pervade the Epistles, while they have caused the Book of the Acts to receive the beautiful and true title of "The Gospel of the Holy Ghost."

Another omission in this book has sometimes been pointed out as a defect. I mean the absence of any allusion to the Holy Eucharist. Now, I think it is not quite correct to say that such allusions are altogether absent. But certainly they are very scanty, and this might at first sight surprise us; and of course we must not allow this silence to tempt us to think lightly of that which Christ has ordained for the support of our souls, and for communion with one another. Yet two answers to this unfavourable criticism may reasonably be suggested. It was the purpose of this book to delineate the Christian's progress in thought and feeling and conduct, through many difficulties, along the path from earth to heaven; and therefore external institutions are not made prominent. And, again, the very remark that was made just above regarding the proportion of truth, as presented by the New Testament, is applicable here in a contrary sense. Just as it is a deviation from that analogy to say little of the Holy Spirit, so is it strictly according to that analogy—at least as regards the Epistles—to say little of the Holy Communion. Bunyan is here strictly following the example of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John.

But now, at parting, to turn from real or supposed defects, and to glance once more at the excellences of this wondrous book, let me note one which might, I suppose, easily escape notice. I mean its inculcation of quiet, active beneficence. How this kind of teaching was to be introduced into such an allegory might easily have perplexed us, if we ourselves had been called to try the experiment. But Bunyan contrives it by his charming delineation of the character of Mercy, who,

both in the House Beautiful and in the House of Mnason, diligently employs her time in working for the poor. At the former place "they stayed about a month or above, and her mind was to be always busying of herself in doing, for when she had nothing to do for herself, she would be making of hose and garments for others, and would bestow them on those that had need." And, again, after many troubles had been safely past (and this was at Vanity Fair), "the Pilgrims grew acquainted with many of the good people of the town, and did them what service they could, and Mercy, as she was wont, laboured much for the poor."

Bunyan's women are true women. No criticism of his great allegory would be approximately complete if this were not well marked. The true place for the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is in the midst of our domestic life. The passage with which I end will never be quoted once too often: "When our Saviour was come, women rejoiced in Him before either man or angel. I read not that ever any man did give unto Christ so much as one groat; but the women followed Him and ministered to Him of their substance. It was a woman that washed His feet with tears, and a woman that anointed His body to the burial. They were women that wept when He was going to the Cross, and women that followed Him from the Cross, and that sat by His sepulchre when He was buried. They were women that were first with Him at His resurrection-morn, and women that brought tidings first to His disciples that He was risen from the dead. Women, therefore, are highly favoured, and show by these things that they are sharers with us in the Grace of Life."



THE PRAYER BOOK,

A DEVOTIONAL MANUAL AND GUIDE.

1. Many who desire assistance in the matter of their Private Devotions, are apt to overlook the help which the Book of Common Prayer itself would administer (p. 301).—2. Its peculiar contents (p. 302); method (p. 302), and structure (p. 305), explained.—3. Its large use of Scripture (p. 306), and of the language of Praise (p. 310), commented on.—4. The Prayer Book proposed at once as a *Devotional Manual* and a *Devotional Guide* (p. 311): teaching men *what things* to pray for, and *how* (p. 313). The Psalter (p. 315). The Prayers (p. 316).—5. The Prayer Book to be studied (p. 317). Suggestiveness of its Calendar (*ibid.*) Value of the Church Catechism and of the Articles of Religion (p. 319).—6. Its Doctrinal Teaching authoritative and most important (p. 320).—7. Preciousness, variety, and beauty of the materials out of which it has been constructed (p. 323).

“As He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His Disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray.”—S. LUKE xi. 1.

THOSE who have made the Book of Common Prayer their study, are aware that remarks upon its contents generally fall under one of three heads. The sources from which it was derived, that is, the ANTIQUITIES of the Prayer Book:—the vicissitudes which it has ex-

“Next to a sound Rule of Faith, there is nothing of so much consequence as a sober standard of feeling in matters of practical Religion; and it is the peculiar happiness of the Church of England to possess, in her authorized formularies, an ample and secure provision for both. But in times of much leisure and unbounded curiosity, when excitement is sought after with a morbid eagerness, this part of the merit of our Liturgy is likely in some measure to be lost on many even of its sincere admirers; the very tempers which most require such discipline setting themselves in general more decidedly against it.”—KEBLE.

perienced, in other words, its HISTORY:—lastly, the fitness and beauty of its several parts, its structure *why* such and such; in a word, its RATIONALE:—under one of these three heads I venture to assert that remarks concerning the Book of Common Prayer will almost invariably be found to fall. On the present occasion I would entirely turn away, if I could, from all such aspects of the question. It is of the Prayer Book as it may be made a *Devotional Manual*, and especially as it is a *Devotional Guide*, that I propose to speak. I shall be best understood if I may preface the matter with a few words.

Now, what chiefly moves me to take up this subject is the singularly unhealthy tone of many of our recent religious Manuals. It is a plain fact that there has sprung up of late among us a devotional literature which is creating an appetite for which our Church of England provides no honest gratification. The taste encouraged by such books finds its lawful gratification only in the literature of Rome. This first.

On the other hand, all but the utterly hardened are conscious of a deep-seated mysterious yearning, which seeks expression, even if it does not always find it, in Prayer. Concerning this entire subject the most scrupulous reserve is practised by mankind; and for a sufficient reason. It is abhorrent to every instinct of genuine piety,—not to say of good taste,—to make one's religious aspirations the subject of discourse. But (what is singular), even from the intercourse of close friends this subject is banished. It seems to be generally felt that the present is just the one department of practice which belongs so exclusively to the heart's privacy, that it may not be talked about *at all*.

Could I but persuade myself that one of the reasons for this, is the fact that, as a rule, educated Christians are sufficiently provided with devotional helps, as well

as fully satisfied with their own actual practice, let me be allowed to declare that instead of coming forward as a teacher, I should have sought to occupy the learner's place. But I believe that nothing of the kind is the fact. To speak plainly, I suspect that in an alarming number of instances, a grievous sense of personal need is experienced: a species of distress felt, for which there are no words: and that many would be grateful for a little advice, if they could but obtain it without having to ask for it.

For after all, how stands the case with most of us? The boy ripened into the man, and no one came forward to help him. The prayers taught in childhood were felt to be too childish: but no others were substituted in their place. The same thing must perforce hold of the other sex. There comes a moment when the heart yearns heavenwards, and inquiry is made after a Manual of Devotion. But no book presents itself which altogether suits. *Who* is to be consulted in this strait? There is none whom one can entirely trust. And so the thing gets put off. . . . To say the truth, we are all prone to be too particular, too difficult in this respect. Almost *any* Form of Prayer is better than *none*. Parts of Bp. Wilson's 'Sacra Privata,' or of Bp. Andrewes' 'Devotions,' might at least be allowed a month's trial. As for trusting to the extempore effusions of the moment, be persuaded, it is a mere deceit: while *thinking* about God and saying nothing, —is *not praying at all*. No. Spiritual communing with GOD may be made a very lofty part of our religious Service. But let us not deceive ourselves. *It is not Prayer.*

I must be understood then in what follows to be addressing those especially who are conscious of needing help in this department of their religious practice. And the substance of what I am about to offer is briefly

this,—That in our English BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, Christian people will find all that they absolutely require; whether in the way of general guidance, or of actual help: whether (I mean) they prefer to regard the Prayer Book (a) as a *Devotional Guide*; or (b) as a *Manual of Devotion*. To begin.

I. Now I venture to think that had any of us set about inventing a Prayer Book, we should above all things have aimed at producing a collection of Prayers adapted to all the wants, griefs, exigencies incidental to Man. What other elements we might have thought fit to introduce, I forbear to conjecture. Sure I am, at all events, that the very last thing which it would have occurred to our unassisted reason to invent would have been the very complex and curious structure which our Prayer Book actually exhibits. For indeed, within the compass of that single small volume is contained—(and thus much is discoverable at a glance)—what used anciently to be distributed through a multitude of books; Breviary, Missal, Manual, Psalter, Ordinal. But dismissing from the account all the accidents (so to speak) of this curious and complicated problem, it is perceived that the very *method* of the Prayer Book is extraordinary. Your attention is particularly invited to what is to follow.

II. It is found, then, that the Church's notion of Divine Worship is the prayerful contemplation of her LORD. Her method with her children is to set before them the earthly life of their SAVIOUR, in the entirety thereof. *Doctrines* indeed she teaches: but she does so chiefly by setting forth *events*. Moreover, she evinces no preferences (I mean, of one event to another): as, for example, of His Crucifixion rather than of His Resurrection from the Dead: of His Resurrection

rather than of His Ascension: and so forth. But she gives prominence to each event in turn,—His Nativity, Circumcision, Baptism; no less than His Temptation, Passion, Death: the Descent into Hell no less than the Resurrection from the Dead: the sending down of the HOLY GHOST no less than the Ascension into Heaven. Thus it is, then, that she exhibits her LORD year by year to her children,—beginning her account at Advent; nor ever pausing till she has crowned the twenty-six weeks, more or less, with “Trinity Sunday.” It is a method which never would—never could—have entered into any unassisted mind. In only one way can the universality of the method be explained; namely, by recognizing that it must needs be Divine.

So, then, you are requested to note at the outset that our religious approaches to GOD throughout the year are *not* regulated by the shifting emotions of our own hearts: by our supposed wants, whether national or congregational: by the clime in which our lot has been individually cast; or by the seasons of the natural year; or by any other earthly variable thing that can be named. The Birth and the Life, the Temptation and the Death, of our SAVIOUR CHRIST: His Resurrection from the Dead, and His Ascension into Heaven, and His sending of the HOLY GHOST:—*these* are the events which determine of what special complexion our worship day by day, Sunday after Sunday, shall be. *He* is invariably set before us. We are invited to fasten our eyes exclusively upon *Him*. And so, it is Advent with us—or it is Christmas—or it is Epiphany: it is Septuagesima—or it is Lent—or it is Holy Week: it is Easter—or it is Ascension—or it is Whitsuntide. What it is with *Him*, *that* it is with *us*! . . . The method, you must needs feel, is an unearthly method. I scruple not to insist that it may fitly be described as heavenly: that it must needs be regarded as Divine.

But (some may ask), Is there then nothing of greater and less in this system? Are we to understand that every event of the Sacred Year is of equal magnitude? every season of precisely equal interest? Not so. There are observed to be (so to speak) two luminous points in the Church's Calendar; Christmas and Easter Day. And if you have never noticed the matter for yourselves, you may like to have it pointed out to you, that twelve Sundays wait upon either,—twenty-four in all: of which it may almost be declared that six lead up to, as it is at least undeniable that six lead away from, either Festival: *those* heralding its approach,—*these* waiting upon its departure. You may, if you please (in order to keep before yourselves the essential continuity of the Church from *the beginning*), call the luminous points of the Church's Year *three*, by adding Pentecost to the account:—Pentecost, in order to keep which S. Paul was so eager to go up to Jerusalem,* because it is the Church's birthday! So that as Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, anciently,—so Easter, Whitsuntide, Christmas, now. And it will be seen that Whitsun Day, the last of *our* great festivals, is waited upon by as many Sundays as the other two great festivals put together: Sundays which follow it in long procession; until the trumpet call of Advent in the chill dark days of winter gives warning that “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh;” and lo, the Church once more puts on her ornaments, in order to go forth again to meet her LORD!

I will not in any way repeat what I have been hitherto saying: but I trust it will be borne in mind that it has been fully shown that *not* self-contemplation, the analysis of one's own thoughts and feelings; but, on the contrary, the devotional survey of an ex-

* Acts xviii. 21; xx. 16. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 8.

ternal object,—and *that* object, the life of a *Divine Person*,—is the Church's Method in her public Service of Almighty God.

III. The next thing to be insisted upon is, that He who is thus elaborately exhibited to our adoring gaze, is not by any means set before us as a pattern only: not by any means proposed to us merely as our great example; but beyond all things declared to be the proper object of our Faith. And this appears in many ways. Thus, besides offering up almost every petition in His Name (in obedience to His own express command),* we confess our SAVIOUR very much in detail, in our Creeds; guarding the doctrine of His Divinity as carefully as we know how, by the recitation about once a month (and always at the Church's three chiefest festivals,—besides Epiphany, Ascension, and Trinity Sunday), of the Creed called “the Athanasian.”† Not only are *Te Deum* and the Litany both addressed to Him, but (what is really very interesting) exceeding jealousy is manifested for His honour and glory by the pains which have been taken to give to either of these a creed-like structure;‡ so that the co-ordinate God-head of the SON with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST shall be apparent “in season, out of season.” The lesser Litany—the “Gloria Patri,”—the concluding prayer at Morning and Evening Service, are all obviously of the nature of Creeds. Our very Sundays we reckon “after *Trinity*,”—unlike those Churches of East and West which number their weeks from “Pen-

* S. John xvi. 23, 24, 26; xiv. 13, 14; xv. 16. The Eastern Churches have strangely neglected this.

† Studious readers should inquire for the Bp. of Chester's (Dr.

Jacobson's) Primary Charge, 1868, —and read pp. 39–44.

‡ The 11th, 12th, and 13th verses of *Te Deum* I presume were an after-thought, whereby the sum of the verses was made uneven.

tecost." But in fact our SAVIOUR'S GODHEAD runs into the very web and woof of our daily, our weekly Service. "We confess Him without Confession," throughout. In our occasional Offices He is everywhere present,—pleading, promising, sanctifying, blessing. What shall be said of the great Eucharistic rite,—but that, in truth, He is its "all in all" ?

IV. It follows to point out the exceeding prominence assigned to *Holy Scripture* in our Prayer Book. This large use of the Book of Life may almost be declared to be the most conspicuous feature of our Service : for indeed when Sentences, Versicles, and LORD'S Prayer ; when Psalms and Canticles ; when first and second Lesson ; when Epistle and Gospel ; when all these are subtracted from the account, little by comparison remains. It is however to the portions of GOD'S Word expressly appointed to be read as Lessons, or at least as Epistle and Gospel, that I now invite your attention. And here two things are to be noted. The first,—That the Church evidently would, if she could, go over the entire volume of Scripture once in the course of every year : the next,—That she clearly recognizes the spiritual and mystical, the typical or prophetic character of the Old Testament Scriptures throughout. Both of these points deserve attention.

For,—passing by the Psalms for a moment (inasmuch as their devotional character might be thought sufficiently to explain their retention by the congregation),—it is really a very remarkable thing that *the reading of Scripture* should form so considerable an element in our public worship. We know that the practice dates from Hebrew times ; its beginning being literally lost in its antiquity. But how is it to be explained ? How, above all, is the retention of the

public reading of the ancient Scriptures by the Christian Church to be accounted for? Clearly only in one way. Not by the force of inveterate habit. There survives to us no single *prayer* of the Church of the Circumcision; nor do we retain anything in our public Service which has not been sifted, challenged, tried in the fierce furnace of a thousand and half a thousand years of fiery experience. How, then, is it to be explained that we read the Scriptures of God's ancient people every whit as religiously as they did? Not certainly because those Scriptures concern us, in their strict letter, as they concerned *them*: for behold, already is Israel after the flesh scattered over the face of the earth "as sheep that have no shepherd." How then, I again ask, is it to be explained? Clearly because we are as convinced as ever they were that Scripture is instinct with the Spirit of the living God; is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* Yes. We give to the reading of God's Word such a conspicuous place, because we know that it is the instrument of Life and Immortality: "the power of GOD unto salvation:"† a chief channel of grace. And so, we freely call it "the life-giving Word." "It hath in it a productive virtue to bring forth fruit according to its kind; that is, the fruit of a new life. Not only a new habit and fashion of life without, but a new kind of life within: new thoughts, a new estimate of things, new delights and actions; *a new nature*."‡ All this, I say, is in the power of GOD's Word written; concerning the older portions of which (you are requested

* Heb. iv. 12.

† Rom. i. 16.

‡ Abp. Leighton.

to remember) S. Paul expressly declares that they "are able to make wise unto salvation."*

But the method of the Christian Church to set a lesson from the Old Testament over against a lesson from the New,—the exquisite method of our own Church, which results in an ever varying combination of first and second Sunday Lessons throughout the year,—is especially suggestive: for thus not only is their co-ordinate authority clearly implied; but their mutual relation, interdependence, agreement, is plainly taught. "Deep answereth to deep." And lest any should overlook this essential sympathy, this organic unity of purpose and design, one grand parallel is elaborately exhibited which cannot possibly have been the result of chance; *cannot* be accounted for by any theory of accommodation. You will observe that with Septuagesima Sunday, when the first note is sounded of the approaching Lenten season, Genesis is begun afresh: whereby the history of Man's Fall and the consequences thereof, are rehearsed preliminary to the history of Man's Recovery; and the narrative is so portioned out that the story of the typical Redemption from Egypt shall exactly synchronize with the story of our SAVIOUR'S Passion, and of the great Salvation which He wrought for us on the bitter Cross: so that, having read on the Sunday next before Easter of the "plagues" (that is, the heavy strokes) whereby Pharaoh was constrained to relax his hold on God's people in the ancient days, and at last to let them go,—on Easter Day we are shown the children of Israel going forth with a high hand, what time "the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea."† How could it be more clearly taught, that not without a corresponding struggle Satan was forced to surrender the captive race of

* 2 Tim. iii. 15.

† Exod. xiv. 27.

mankind; and finally, that by a corresponding overthrow the great Enemy of our Salvation was trampled under foot by “the stronger than the strong”?* Surely, it is for no other purpose but to convince us of the completeness of the Salvation which was wrought for us by the glorious antitype, that in conclusion it is expressly declared that “Israel *saw* the Egyptians dead upon the seashore”!† . . . Ah, men may think what they please about this matter: but I insist that a grander or a more exquisite, certainly a more concerning or a more instructive specimen of type and antitype, is not to be found in the whole compass of the sacred volume; and further, that by embodying all this in her Prayer Book, our holy Mother, the Church, makes a grand confession of her faith; sets on eternal record a plain witness of the spirit in which *she* reads the Holy Scriptures of her God. The reasonableness of what she does may be flouted, but it can never be disproved: her faithfulness therein may be disregarded, but it may never be denied. It is thus; clearly, that she invites her children to read the sacred volume for themselves. She teaches them to see in their first father Adam, and in our SAVIOUR CHRIST, the two roots of Humanity:‡ bids them discern that “as in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive.”§ And thus we are brought back to the observation which was offered at the outset,—viz., that the system prescribed for us by our Book of Common Prayer is the worship of *a Person*; and *that Person* our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST: very GOD as well as very Man.

You will feel that what I have been saying conveys an altogether different notion of what should be a Christian man’s devotions, than Man’s unaided wit

* S. Luke xi. 22.

† Exod. xiv. 30.

‡ Bp. Sanderson’s Works, vol. i. p. 69.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 22.

could by possibility have invented for itself. A right Faith in the LORD JESUS CHRIST,—and the continual Confession of that Faith:—the religious contemplation of His Birth, and of His Death, and of the abiding blessedness which has resulted to mankind from His Ascension into Heaven: whereby the three great Festivals of the elder Covenant are observed to re-appear transfigured, and to stand before us perpetually in glory:—lastly, the patient searching into the Scriptures of Truth, whereby we look to be transformed into the sacred image of Him* by whom those Scriptures were originally inspired, and with whose Divine Spirit they are still full to overflowing:—all this, I repeat, is an extraordinary method of approach to God,—quite unattainable by ourselves unaided; but which is yet observed to be prescribed on the very surface of the Book of Common Prayer.

V. Your attention is next invited to one other distinct feature of our Service; which is also, I think, to be called surprising. Allusion is made to the singular circumstance that *Praise*: Praise, even more than Prayer: *first* Praise, *then* Prayer:—proves to be the business of the Sanctuary. This is a distinct subject, but it may not be wholly overlooked when the Prayer Book is discoursed of,—whether as a Devotional Manual, or as a Devotional Guide. The recitation of the Creed is clearly an act of *Praise*: so is the use of the Canticles, and of the Psalms. The very reading of Scripture,—which for the most part is nothing else but a rehearsal of the World's history “as it is God's World,”†—a record of His providential dealings with His creatures from the beginning until now,—what else is it but an ascription of Praise; inasmuch as it is throughout the

* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

† Bp. Butler, ‘Analogy,’ P. II. c. vii. (middle).

rehearsal of GOD's goodness, GOD's greatness, GOD's glory? This next, then: the prominence of *Praise* in the business of the sanctuary: the striking fact that Praise not only comes before Prayer, but occupies by far the more prominent position and conspicuous place in our Service. And so much for what I venture to call the chief characteristics of our Book of Common Prayer.

VI. Now, it will be in the memory of all who hear me that our SAVIOUR twice delivered His pattern Prayer: first, unsolicited, in the Sermon on the Mount, when He introduced it with the words,—“*After this manner therefore pray ye.*”* Next, at the request that He would “teach His Disciples how to pray, as John also taught his Disciples,” when He answered,—“*When ye pray, say.*”† Here then is a plain intimation that the LORD's Prayer is both to be used as it stands,—a divinely prescribed form, and the very best: also that it is to be looked upon as a general guide to Christian men in their devotions. And out of this precept further grows, as I think, the general hint,—that, besides faithfully adhering to the appointed formularies of the Church, we shall do wisely to frame and fashion *all* our Devotions on the same authorized model. To come to the point,—I propose it for your consideration whether it will not be our wisdom, besides making the Book of Common Prayer to some extent our actual Manual of Private Devotion, to regard it as our best general Devotional Guide. It is under these combined aspects that I propose in conclusion to say a few words about it. The remarks which follow will be perceived to grow out of what has been already offered; and they have for their object to assist and guide Christian people in respect of their Private Prayers.

* S. Matth. vi. 9.

† S. Luke xi. 2.

§ 1. It is to be presumed then that, even in private, the orderly succession of the Christian Seasons should not be wholly overlooked. We may reasonably seek to associate ourselves with the whole body of the faithful,—to keep ourselves in harmony with the Church Universal throughout the World,—even in our private and ordinary supplications to the throne of Grace. By Collect,—by Psalm,—at least by versicle, or by the suggestive guidance of some single text of Scripture,—we should surely aim at setting before ourselves the Season of the Sacred Year. And the selection—out of the abundant materials at our command—of words appropriate to the Season, will be an excellent exercise for individual piety.

In the same spirit, it is thought that (besides the daily use of the Collect for the day) the Collect for Easter-Eve might reasonably find a place in the prayers for Saturday: that on Friday the Collect for the Sunday next before Easter might be invariably used: that the Collect for Ascension-Day might be repeated every Thursday: and (for want of a better) that the first Collect for Good Friday might be used on Wednesday,—the week-day of our LORD's Betrayal. In this manner I venture to suggest that a devout mind might be kept in constant remembrance of the things which most concern its peace; kept in a kind of weekly harmony with the history of Man's Redemption. This first, then. But to proceed more methodically.

§ 2. It is thought that out of the numerous forms of Confession which the Prayer Book exhibits,* *one* may always be selected to precede our private Office. The LORD's Prayer, with certain Collects (of which the book contains far more than a hundred,—and some,

* At Morning and Evening Prayer, in the Services for Holy Communion, Visitation of the Sick, Communion.

as the prayer for Unity, hid away in unpromising places), perforce will follow. And since it must needs happen that for certain special needs of our own, no adequate expression in the Prayer Book will be discoverable,—the forms required will either have to be sought for in the Manuals of those great Masters of devotional utterance,—Andrewes, Cosin, Taylor, Wilson ;—or else they must be invented for ourselves. But in this we shall be wonderfully helped by having first made the prayers in the Prayer Book our study ; and having learned from them both *what things* it is right to pray for, and *how* (in what kind of language, I mean) the desires of our soul may more fitly find expression. I venture to say a few words on either head.

(a) I suspect then that from an attentive survey of all our authorized formularies of Devotion will inevitably result a suspicion that we are apt to be too narrow in the scope of our private prayers. A hint is surely obtained that we should extend our horizon,—enlarge the circle of our regards,—beyond the immediate sphere of home, and the locality where our own lot has been cast.* I shall be content to pass on when I have deliberately offered the suggestion that *besides* supplications for ourselves and for those we love best,—our Country's prospects, our Church's welfare, our Rulers in Church and State should find place in our private Devotions. The languishing cause of Foreign Missions would not, I venture to think, be for ever a languishing cause if men would but generally "pray the LORD of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest,"—in obedience to their LORD's express command.† When great events are happening, and vast public questions are distracting public opinion,—disturbing men's minds and our own,—what fitter attitude and occupation for the devout

* See Note at the end, p. 325.

† S. Matth. ix. 37, 38.

spirit than an aspiration, however brief, that the issue whatever it be may promote God's glory, — prove conducive to the Nation's truest good?

(b) Next,—We shall find *materials*, so to speak, in many an unexpected quarter of the Prayer Book. I will illustrate my meaning by some examples taken at random. Much in the Communion and the Baptismal Services; in the Confirmation Service; in that for the Visitation of the Sick and that for the Burial of the Dead,—is capable of being converted into Prayer. The fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth of the "Thanksgivings" supply valuable materials for Praise. There is a grand invocation in the last prayer at evening for King Charles' Day. Let me not be thought officious if I point out that the Anthems in the Burial Service, as they are among the most pathetic, so are they also among the most congenial utterances which an afflicted spirit can pour forth,—suppose on the week-day which is most closely bound up with the memory of its private grief. And how can a Christian man possibly begin his devotions on Sunday morning better than by repeating the "Anthems" for Easter Day?

§ 3. Then further it is thought that the Apostles' Creed, occasionally recited, may well form part of the private orisons of one who is debarred from taking part in the daily public Service of the Church.

§ 4. So too, a portion of Scripture, to be read with exceeding attention,—read, as if the belief were seriously cherished that the soul is to be sustained, and must live thereby; *this* will also become an inseparable element of Private Prayer. There can in fact be no doubt that short passages of Scripture, whether hortatory or devotional, may with advantage be woven into the staple of our private Office.

§ 5. And further, words of Praise,—if it be only the use of some form of Doxology: the recitation of a

Psalm, or part of a Psalm: the element of *Praise*, in some sort, I repeat, will never be absent from those devotions which aspire to excellence; and which are animated by a spirit the reverse of servile,—the spirit of a son rather than of a slave.

Indeed, it is high time to declare that in *the Psalter* the materials for private devotion will be most successfully sought for; most easily as well as most abundantly found. Certain of the Psalms, men are strongly recommended to commit to memory. With all of them they are invited to make themselves more and yet more familiar. To this best Treasury of Devotion, if they are wise, they will have habitual recourse. That there is here a medicine for every smart, a leaf for the healing of every wound, has been again and again pointed out. “Let there be any disease or grief incident to the soul of man” (remarks our own Hooker), “any wound or sickness named, for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found. Hereof” (he adds) “it is that we covet to make the Psalms especially familiar unto all.”* If it were only because the Psalter may be fitly described as the habitual Prayer Book of the Son of Man,—we might vaunt its excellence as a Devotional Manual; as the very flower and best ornament of our Book of Common Prayer. But when we add the consideration that these are the pious breathings of God’s chiefest Saints in the most ancient days: that hither the holiest of mankind, from the time of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the rest of “the goodly company,” have habitually resorted for consolation, help, guidance: that *this* hath been the channel (the Prayer Book Version of the Psalms, I mean) through which our own forefathers for many generations have breathed out, in

* Eccl. Pol. V. xxxvii. 2.

private as well as in public, their devotional utterances; and that all those whom we have ourselves ever loved and lost, have found in the same compositions their own chiefest help and consolation;—enough has surely been said to explain why we should recommend this portion of the Prayer Book most heartily and unreservedly to as many as shall come after us. The extraordinary variety of the Psalter ensures that it shall meet the spirit of Man in almost its every mood. Here is self-abasement the deepest—self-reproach the most unsparing. Here is heart-broken sorrow, and the most affecting resignation is also here. Here is jubilant gratitude,—and undoubting confidence in GOD: cheerful Hope, and meditative Love, and the spirit of unwearied Praise,—all are found here in perfection. And the soul professes throughout that GOD is the one thing which it longs for: *His* Word, its “songs in the house of its pilgrimage.”* And how could a better Manual of Private Devotion be possibly secured for beings such as we are than such a venerable, such a Divine text-book as this?

§ 6. But next, it is thought that one of the best results of making the Prayer Book one's model and guide will be the calm rebuke which it perpetually administers to Pride; to Ambition; to the worldly spirit; to Covetousness, and Anxiety, and Unrest. Let every one candidly admit that he has had some individual experience of this Discipline. We were intent on some scheme of selfish aggrandizement,—or we were distracted by earthly objects of desire,—or we were engrossed by the pursuit of secular pleasure. Oh but there is no single Prayer or Collect to be found from the beginning to the end of the Book, which provides expression for such sentiments as these. What do we

* Ps. cxix. 54.

find instead? The meek submission of our own will to God's Will: a burning solicitude for His honour and glory, for the welfare of His Church, for the conservation of His Truth: and for ourselves, a supreme anxiety for the continued aid and guidance of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT,—fear, only lest we should in the end be disappointed of our own everlasting hope. Are there no prayers, then? Yes, truly; but they are prayers for protection against our spiritual Enemies: prayers for Grace to live well: prayers for guidance: prayers for pardon: prayers for peace. I am saying that the calm unearthly tone of our Collects,—(which are essentially our Western inheritance, the Eastern Church knowing nothing whatever of such compositions;)—the Divine Spirit which breathes in every one of them, making each the approved vehicle of some one special aspiration of the devout soul,—*this* cannot but prove an incalculable help.

It is time to draw these remarks to a close.

VII. Give me leave to declare that men have no idea, until they begin seriously and thoughtfully to study for themselves the volume which has suggested the present Sermon,—how richly it deserves, how amply it will repay, any amount of attention which they may be able to bestow upon it. For really there is nothing within the compass of the Prayer Book without a history: nothing which has not been again and again carefully tried and sifted: nothing which occupies its actual place without a weighty, even if it should not always appear to oneself to be a sufficient reason. And it is only when men deliberately set about analysing or investigating one of its component parts, that they are made aware how suggestive, how full of the best Religious instruction it is throughout.

VIII. Thus, the very names enshrined in our

Calendar—(a mere remnant of the names which used anciently to appear; the merest scantling, remember, of the Hagiologies of the East and of the West);—even these, to go no further, might at least be counted, analysed, distributed into classes. And the problem might be proposed,—*Why* the names retained are such and such? and the question asked,—Who *were* these ancient Bishops,—Martyrs,—Confessors,—Virgins,—Saints? And the thought indulged,—How singularly does our Calendar to this hour connect us with the ancient Churches of Asia* and of Africa,†—of Italy‡ and of Gaul,§—of Spain,|| and of Germany,¶ and of Britain!**

And yet, while we admire the Church's wisdom in thus preserving to us so many precious memorials of the past, how do we reverence the jealousy which she has shown for her LORD's honour in scarcely admitting the blessed Virgin Mary herself to more than a single place of very conspicuous honour! She has Saints' Days for none but for the chiefest names in the Gospel: and even *those* she exhibits only as irradiated by some ray of glory from the Person of her LORD. ††

IX. And this leads me to point out what a considerable body of sound Divinity,—how vast an amount of the best Religious teaching,—may be derived from

* *E.g.* SS. George, Nicolas, Margaret.

† *E.g.* SS. Cyprian, Augustine, Catharine, Perpetua.

‡ *E.g.* SS. Clement, Ambrose, Gregory, Cecilia, Agnes.

§ *E.g.* SS. Hilary, Giles, Faith.

|| *E.g.* S. Vincent.

¶ *E.g.* S. Boniface.

** *E.g.* SS. Alban, David, Chad, Bede, Swithun, Etheldreda.

†† Consider the Collects for the Annunciation, the Purification, and those for the Saints' Days generally. Next, contrast our English Saints' Day Collects with the oldest Latin ones extant; and then say *which* S. Peter, S. Paul, S. John would have approved,—*which* they would have condemned as simply abominable.

an attentive survey of the contents of the Prayer Book; in particular from its occasional Offices. I choose to believe that I am addressing those who have many a time asked themselves the question,—*What*, after all, are *the essentials* of Religion? What is the sum and substance of the *necessary* Faith and Practice of a Christian man? And the answer to this question is nowhere so effectually furnished as in the Church Catechism. *He* is the victim of a very childish misapprehension indeed who supposes that the short composition alluded to is intended for children only. The best Divines will be prepared to give a very different account of the matter. By no means ashamed am I to declare that I recur to it continually for guidance; and never recall any portion of its familiar teaching without conscious refreshment, advantage, help. As one who accounts it his chief blessedness to have been born and bred a member of the Church of England, I will add the frank avowal that in the Church's "Articles of Religion" I find constant comfort as well as guidance. I regard with suspicion the Clergyman who professes disinclination to anything which he meets with *there*. You are all invited to make yourselves familiar with that authentic exposition of our Church's teaching on not a few of the subjects which are even now distracting opinion and occasioning strife within the Church.

X. The authoritative interpretations of Texts of Scripture scattered up and down the pages of the Prayer Book are by no means few.* but the teaching of the Church of England upon every *Doctrine* of prime importance is a treasure which no faithful son of the

* *E.g.* S. Matth. xxii. 11, 12. S. Luke xiv. 16-24. S. John vi. 56; xiii. 27; xix. 34, &c.

Church can afford to overlook. This appears in her Collects very conspicuously;* as well as in her choice of Epistle and Gospel.† But next to the short Catechism, it is to be found nowhere so deliberately set down, so judiciously expressed, as in her occasional Offices. Nothing can be more unequivocal than the Church of England's utter repudiation of the Romish doctrine of the Mass in her Service for Holy Communion: nothing more plain than her own teaching,—which is the teaching of Scripture as witnessed to by the Church in the purest ages.‡

While she stiffly maintains that “the Body and Blood of CHRIST are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the LORD'S Supper,” no countenance does she lend to the novel formula—“Real Objective Presence.” On the contrary, she clearly repudiates the doctrine which those words convey, if the words are to be taken according to their apparent signification. In the words of Bp. Cosin,—“True it is that the Body and Blood of CHRIST are sacramentally and really (not feignedly) present, *when the blessed Bread and Wine are taken by the faithful Communicants*; and as true is it also, that they are not present but *only when the hallowed elements are so taken*. Therefore whosoever so receiveth them, *at that time when he receiveth them*, rightly doth he adore and reverence his SAVIOUR there together with the sacramental Bread and Cup exhibiting His own Body and

* Consider the witness they so largely bear to the doctrine of “preventing Grace.” Consider, again, the beautiful teaching of the Collects for S. Michael and All Angels,—for S. Luke the Evangelist,—for S. Simon and S. Jude,—for All Saints' Day.

† *E.g.* the Gospel for Mid-Lent and the Sunday next before Ad-

vent.

‡ On this subject Canon Trevor's ‘Catholic Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist’ (2nd edit. 1876) is heartily recommended, as at once the ablest and faithfullest exposition of Eucharistic Doctrine which has appeared in our time. It should be in the hands of all our Clergy.

Blood unto them. Yet, because that Body and Blood is neither sensibly present (nor otherwise at all present *but only to them that are duly prepared to receive them*, and in the very act of receiving them and the consecrated elements together, to which they are sacramentally in that act united) the adoration is then and there given to CHRIST Himself; neither is, nor ought to be, directed to any external sensible object, such as are the blessed elements.”* And that this is essentially the doctrine of Scripture itself plainly appears by the very words of Institution: *not*, “This is My Body: take it, eat it:” but,—“Take, eat; this is My Body:” *i.e. to you that (worthily) partake* it is verily and indeed My Body. And so S. Paul expressly: “The Bread which we break”—not “*is* the Body of CHRIST,” but “*is the communion of the Body of CHRIST.*” And this is so plainly the teaching of our English Book of Common Prayer, that no ingenuity will ever avail to wrest it into accordance with the Theology of Rome.

He again must be a singularly perverse person, to say the least, who will contend that the practice of habitual auricular Confession finds any sanction whatever in any of our formularies. On the contrary, *who* will hesitate to admit that it is, by implication, disallowed?—On the Church’s teaching concerning Regeneration in Baptism it is idle to affect uncertainty so long as the Prayer Book stands.—In the Confirmation Service we find the Apostolic doctrine of laying on of hands set forth in all its fulness.—In the Marriage Service, we are shown that Holy Matrimony is only not a Sacrament.—Read over to yourselves many a time the Service for the Visitation of the Sick. Make yourselves very familiar with it. Do not put this off

* Cosin’s Works, vol. v. p. 344. See also Bp. Jacobson’s Charge already (p. 142) referred to,—pp. 35 to 39.

until your chamber is growing dark,—the objects hazy and indistinct about you,—and till you yourself become conscious that your spirit is hovering between the confines of two Worlds. *One* of the good results of reading that Service thoughtfully over will be to persuade men to make their Wills. But they will get more good from it than *that*, if they will condescend to ponder it sometimes on their knees. For, besides the instructive circumstance that there is found no single prayer for *recovery* in the whole of the Service, how vividly does it set before the soul the solemn hour of death, and the danger of putting off till the season of fainting nature the work of Repentance!—Especially are men exhorted to make the Burial Service their study: the Burial Service,—which is so much found fault with, but which so few persons seem to understand. How much of consolation does it administer! What grand lessons of Charity does it inculcate! How many difficult problems in Divinity does it effectually solve!—In days like these, when a certain species of unbelief, or at least of misbelief, is fashionable, men will do well to make themselves familiar with the Proper Prefaces in the Communion Office: especially with that for Whitsunday.—The Ordinal is no doubt for the study of the Clergy especially: but I wish the lay-people would read it oftener, if only in order that they might insist the more loudly on our aiming at a higher and yet a higher standard: as well as rebuke us with more boldness if we ever show ourselves unmindful of the promise we made at the most solemn moment of our lives (1) “to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange Doctrines contrary to God’s Word:” (2) to “lay aside the study of the world and the flesh:” (3) “*reverently to obey our Ordinary and other chief Ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over us:*” and (4) “*so to*

administer the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of CHRIST, as this Church and Realm hath received the same."

XI. To conclude. When it is considered what a highly complex structure the Prayer Book is,—enriched with the spoils of all the ages, and exhibiting the choicest utterances of every time and every clime,—it seems impossible to overrate its preciousness. We take leave of our sick with the divinely-taught blessing wherewith Aaron and his sons blessed the children of Israel.* “The Song of the Three Children” connects East and West alike with the later days of the Church of the Circumcision. “Gloria in excelsis” reproduces the Hymn of the Angels on the night when CHRIST was born.† The Seraphic Hymn recalls the burning pages of the prophet Isaiah,‡ and is nothing else but a revelation of what is passing within the bright courts of Heaven itself. Our Creeds, which embody the traditional Faith of universal Christendom, come to us here, neither ensanguined by the blood of Martyrs, not drowned by the strife of tongues; but calm as if they were indeed the utterance of those who bequeathed them to us,—denizens long since of the bowers of bliss, who “walk in white, for they are worthy.”§ On Easter Day we rehearse aloud the Paschal Psalms|| of GOD’S ancient people,—the very “Hymn” most probably which our SAVIOUR CHRIST and His Apostles sung at the close of the Last Supper.¶ The man of Uz meets us with his grand utterances—(“I know that my REDEEMER liveth,”—“The LORD gave and the LORD hath taken away,”)—on the very threshold of our

* Numbers vi. 24-26.

† S. Luke ii. 14.

‡ Isa. vi. 3.

§ Rev. iii. 4.

|| Ps. cxiii. cxiv. cxviii.

¶ S. Matth. xxvi. 30. S. Mark xiv. 26.

Churchyards; and when we stand beside the open grave, it is still the same solemn voice from the hills of Edom which pours forth the affecting plaint:—"Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live and is full of misery."* The grand mediæval Hymn "In the midst of life we are in death" follows immediately: as if to show that the Communion of Saints is a thing wholly independent of Time, and that Holy Church is determined to give her children of her very best, wheresoever it may happen to have been found.

XII. And verily, her carefulness and her skill in collecting her jewels, may well astonish. "Magnificat," "Benedictus," "Nunc Dimittis," she could not of course overlook, for are they not all three divine? But how exquisitely has she elaborated "Te Deum" out of the cry "Thrice-Holy"! and modelled the responses in her Litany on Hezekiah's prayer that "the *good LORD*" would pardon!† How careful has she been to preserve for her children the supplication of the woman of Canaan, and the cry of the two blind men on two separate occasions!‡ How many a precious gem of ancient Hebrew utterance has she effectually retained in her versicles! How religiously does she end every one of her prayers with the old Hebrew acclaim of affirmation,§ lest we should at any time forget "the rock whence we are hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we are digged."|| Lastly, how proudly does she, every here and there, set down side by side with the very noblest compositions of old times a few solemn sentences which by comparison she made but

* Job xix. 25: i. 21; xiv. 1.

† 2 Chron. xxx. 18.

‡ S. Matth. xv. 22; ix. 27; xx.

30, 31.

§ Deut. xxvii. 15, 16, &c.

|| Isa. li. 1.

yesterday,—as if conscious that the SPIRIT of the Eternal GOD is in her still, of a truth, and that her own words will bear comparison with almost any words on record! I forbear to cite from our more recent Collects, which are assuredly inferior to none in the whole book: * but you will not be offended with me, I know, if I take leave of you with the grand Benediction in the Service for the Visitation of the Sick which first appeared in King Edward's first Book, and has remained unaltered from that day to this. Surely those magnificent sentences—(*who* could suppose that they exhibit the English of 1549?)—surely those sentences. by whomsoever they may have been penned, any Church in the world, at any period, would have been proud to claim! Show me, in any Liturgy of East or West, words which for sublimity surpass these which follow: —“The Almighty LORD, who is a most strong tower to all them that put their trust in Him; to whom all things in Heaven, in Earth, and under the Earth, do bow and obey; be now and evermore thy defence: and make thee know and feel that there is none other Name under Heaven given to man, in whom and through whom thou mayest receive health and salvation, but only the Name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST”!

(NOTE referred to at p. 313.)

I avail myself of this blank space to introduce an apposite quotation from Fell's Life of Hammond:—“The charity and extent of his prayers was as exuberant as the zeal and fervour. He thought it very unreasonable that our intercessions should not be as universal as our SAVIOUR'S Redemption was; and would complain of that thrift and narrowness of mind to which we are so prone, confining our care either to ourselves and relatives, or at most to those little angles of the world that more immediately concerned us, and which on due account bear very low proportions to the whole. There was no emergent distress however remote, but it enlarged his Litany.”

* As, the Collects for the 3 S. in Adv., S. Stephen's Day, 6 S. after Epiph., Easter Even, &c. &c.

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